

THROWING IN THE TOWEL: WHY INSURGENTS NEGOTIATE

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University of Pittsburgh, 2012

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

More than ten years has passed since the United States and its coalition partners first invaded Afghanistan to depose the Taliban. Few dispute the successes of the American military in toppling Mullah Omar's organization and simultaneously driving Al-Qaida militants from Afghanistan.

While US Special Forces and predator drones continue to hunt Al-Qaida members around the globe—many scattered from Afghanistan and popped up in countries including Yemen, Somalia, Pakistan, Iraq and a host of other trouble spots, from North Africa to Southeast Asia and beyond. And though Al-Qaida may be on the run, the Taliban remains a force within Afghanistan.

Indeed, as of late 2012, it has become evident that the base case scenario for the United States and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), though perhaps not for the current Afghan government, is to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and end the war through a cease-fire and power-sharing agreement.

How could things have started so well for the US, only to arrive now at the point where negotiating with the Taliban to bring its members back to power in large swaths of Afghanistan is the *best* of what otherwise are mostly bad alternatives (another civil war, Pakistani domination

of the country, or a government so weak it is unable to prevent Al-Qaida from returning in large numbers). This may be shocking to many, not least because of the enormous military might and vast resources brought to bear by US and ISAF forces. It may be less shocking when one considers that “*more than half of all insurgencies have been settled through negotiations.*”¹

This dissertation examines four historical case studies of insurgency and analyzes which factors are the most important when an insurgent group decides to negotiate. Based on a case study analysis of the Provisional IRA, Hizballah, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and the African National Congress, I have attempted to construct a theory of insurgent negotiation, built upon an analytic framework that tests multiple hypotheses on an insurgent group’s decisionmaking process. My central thesis is that insurgents are more likely to negotiate an end to the conflict under the following conditions:

- They are unable to sustain a series of successful attacks (operational tools)
- They are unable to sustain their existence as a cohesive entity (organizational tools)

Still, not all operational and organizational tools are created equal. Which of these tools is the most important to determining why insurgents negotiate? Within each of the two independent variables (IVs), I analyzed five sub-variables to determine the effect they have on my dependent variable (DV) the insurgents’ decision of whether or not to negotiate. I find that of the five operational tools examined, sanctuary/safe haven and funding/financing have the greatest effect on whether or not insurgents negotiate, while group composition and popular support are the

¹ Ben Connable and Martin Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2010, p.180. It should be noted that when the authors report that half of all insurgencies have been settled through negotiations, they are referring to the database compiled for the quantitative section of the report. How the authors compiled the database is available in the section on “Case Studies Methodology” in Appendix A of the report pp.157-164. Overall, Connable and Libicki analyzed 89 insurgencies, 16 of which were still ongoing at the time of their study. This means that 73 of the insurgencies had concluded, and 40 of those 73 (55%, so more than half) had been settled through negotiations. When one includes earlier negotiations, amnesties, or cease fires, the number jumps to 84 percent of all insurgencies.

most critical organizational tools in the insurgency's decision-making calculus. These independent variables are framed by condition variables (contextual factors) that govern the magnitude of the impact the IVs have on the DV and thus contribute to our understanding of the conditions under which negotiations take place.

For counterinsurgents, time and resources are limited. Therefore, knowing which tools are the most important in determining whether or not insurgents are likely to negotiate can help the COIN force prioritize which tools to target and which tools are of lesser importance. Understanding which factors are important and which are not is crucial to shaping the current debate on strategy in Afghanistan. "Time is short, and effective engagement with the Taliban could mean the difference between a protracted, unwinnable conflict and a pragmatic solution acceptable to both Washington and its Afghan allies."² In my final analysis on the Taliban, I argue that bringing the war in Afghanistan to an end will entail negotiating with the insurgency. My analysis suggests that the most important factors affecting the Taliban's decision to negotiate are sanctuary/safe haven and funding/financing (operational tools), group composition, and popular support (organizational tools), all framed within the context of a mutually hurting stalemate (condition variable).

² Fotini Christia and Michael Semple, "Flipping the Taliban: How to Win in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.88, No.4, July/August 2009," p.45.

1.2 METHOD

1.2.1 Case Selection

Cases were selected from the comprehensive dataset of 89 insurgencies generated by RAND's Martin C. Libicki, who drew off of a larger list of conflicts from James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin's "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War" study from the *American Political Science Review*.³ Fearon and Laitin's list of 127 insurgencies were determined according to the following criteria: internal wars where more than 1,000 were killed, with at least 100 on each side. To the list of 127, Libicki then added 11 insurgencies that passed the 1,000 dead mark after their data cutoff date of 1999 and subtracted 51 insurgencies that were more in the nature of coups, countercoups, and spontaneous insurrections, in addition to making a few other adjustments. The resulting list of 89 insurgencies has been a standard for RAND research on insurgencies for the past several years.⁴ From this list of 89 insurgencies, fifteen were excluded from case selection because they are considered ongoing, leaving the total cases at 74. Next, I systematically analyzed each of the 74 cases to determine the insurgents' operational and organizational capabilities in order to code them and place them in one of four categories. Following this analysis, cases were coded as follows:

- 16 cases were coded as high operational capacity/low organizational capacity

³ James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War," *American Political Science Review*, Vol.97, No.1, February 2003, pp.75-90.

⁴ For a full version of the list, see Appendix A, Martin C. Libicki, "Eighty Nine Insurgencies: Outcomes and Endings," from David C. Gompert and John Gordon IV, *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2008, pp.373-376.

- 22 cases were coded as high operational capacity/high organizational capacity
- 20 cases were coded as low operational capacity/low organizational capacity
- 16 cases were coded as low operational capacity/high organizational capacity

For my in-depth case study analyses, one case was selected from each category (see Figure 1 below). The selection of cases demonstrates both geographic variation (Western Europe, Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East) as well as variation in outcome (COIN win, COIN loss, and two cases of mixed outcomes, with one mixed outcome favoring the insurgents and another mixed outcome favoring the COIN forces).⁵

⁵ As Connable and Libicki note in *How Insurgencies End*, classifying outcomes of insurgencies is conceptually difficult. They ask, "if the government gives insurgents amnesty and then allows the insurgents' proxy political party to enter legitimate politics, who has won? Outcomes like this are frequent in insurgency, so characterizing individual outcomes can be open to dispute." Connable and Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, p.14.

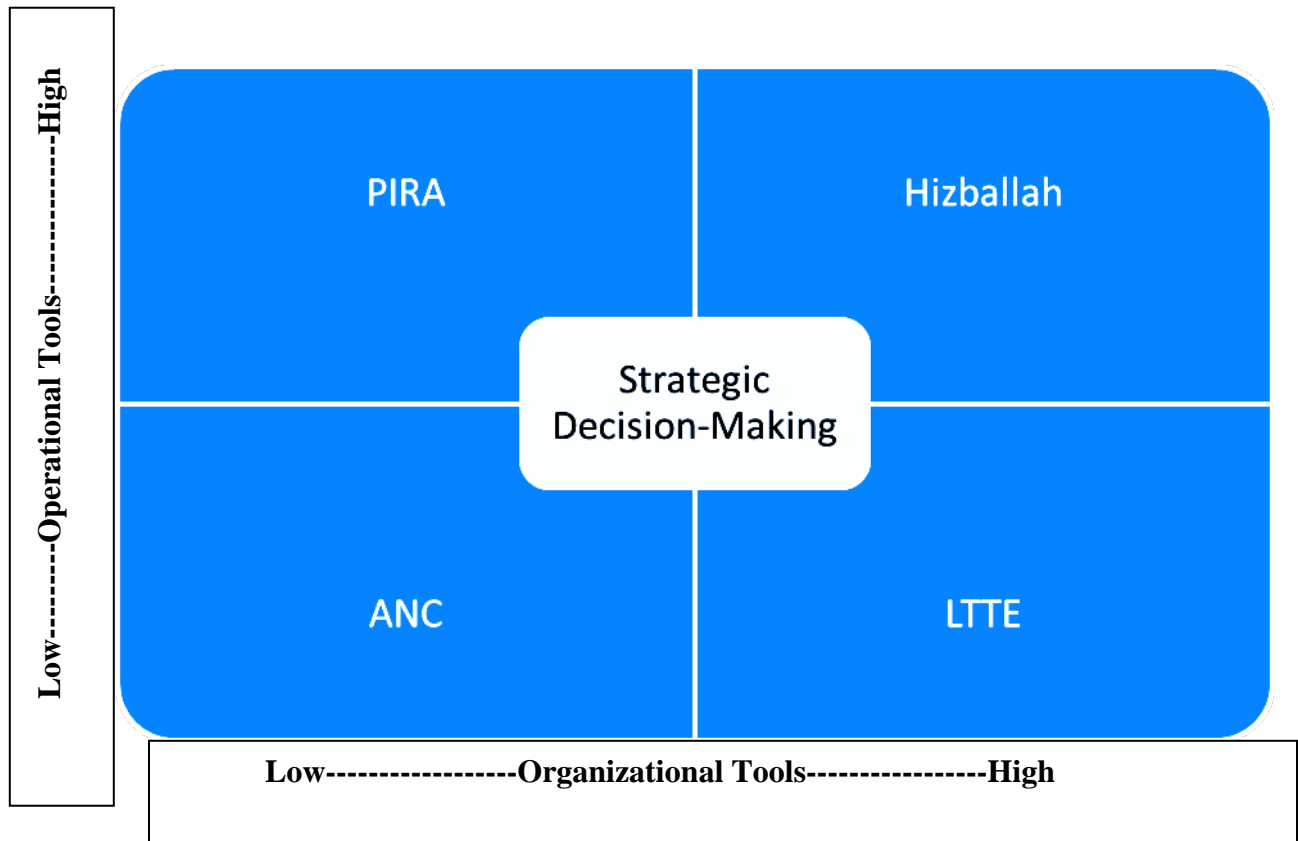


Figure 1: Operational and Organizational Tools of Insurgents

1.2.2 Analytic Framework

The analytic framework used in this research owes much to the work of Kim Cragin and Sara Daly on assessing group motivations and capabilities in a changing world. Their study titled *The Dynamic Terrorist Threat* contributed a great deal to my own research process. What earlier in this process I had referred to as the variables of *resources* and *leadership* are now categories that have been renamed *operational tools* and *organizational tools*. As the authors mention in putting their own work in perspective with regard to its contribution to the terrorism and insurgency literature, “RAND has researched the strategies, objectives, organizational structures,

and capabilities of terrorist groups for over 30 years. Therefore, this framework and analysis of group capabilities should be viewed not as revolutionary, but rather as building on past research and methods for analyzing terrorism.”⁶ Similarly, my own research also builds on past research and methods for analyzing terrorism and insurgency, with a particular focus on the decision-making process and how insurgencies end. This framework allows me to test the hypotheses derived from my literature review on insurgency and counterinsurgency.

1.2.3 Independent Variables and Associated Preliminary Hypotheses

1.2.3.1 Operational Tools

Operational tools comprise the capabilities that allow insurgents to sustain a series of successful attacks.⁷ The hypotheses that follow below are predicated upon the notion that, the less capable insurgents are of conducting and sustaining successful attacks, the more vulnerable they are to defeat, and the more likely they will be to negotiate in order to avoid losing to the COIN force while gaining nothing in return.

HYPOTHESIS 1: *AN INSURGENCY WITH LIMITED OR ANTIQUATED WEAPONRY/AMMUNITION IS LESS CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS ON COIN FORCES*

This hypothesis is straightforward and simple—insurgents with greater access to weapons, ammunition and a more sophisticated and lethal arsenal will be able to conduct more successful

⁶ Kim Cragin and Sara Daly, *The Dynamic Terrorist Threat: An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in a Changing World*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2004, Note 1, p.xiv.

⁷ Ibid, p.25.

attacks on COIN forces. Weapons can be obtained internally, from the population; externally, from state sponsors, diaspora communities or other non-state actors; or organically, constructed with materials found within the insurgents' operating environment (hence the "I," for *improvised*, in improvised explosive device, or IED).

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union respectively supplied weapons to insurgents fighting proxy wars in places like Angola, El Salvador, and Afghanistan. The introduction of certain weapons into a conflict can completely alter the outcome. It is widely believed that CIA-supplied Stinger missiles were the main reason why Arab and Afghan *mujahedin* were able to defeat a militarily superior Soviet Union during the 1980s. The major fallback of relying on external sources of weaponry is that if these sources dry up, the insurgents must identify a new source of weaponry or risk having their guns fall silent.

Hizballah relied on a vast arsenal of weaponry to expand its attack capability, sustain its operations over the long-term, inflict psychological damage on its adversaries, and diversify its methods and tactics. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam diversified its weapons and weapon sources, developed links to other terrorist and insurgent groups, and assassinated Sri Lankan government and military officials. Neither Hizballah nor the LTTE struggled to obtain weapons, and neither group negotiated an end to their respective conflicts. On the other hand, both the PIRA and the ANC had trouble at various points acquiring the weapons necessary to prosecute the insurgency, and both groups ultimately negotiated with the government.

Tracing the trajectory of each conflict suggests that when insurgents' supplies of weapons were depleted, its leaders sued for temporary peace. Indeed, prior to the PIRA's 1975 cease-fire, one former PIRA officer commented, "We had no weapons. In the Second Battalion of the

Belfast Brigade there were three weapons.”⁸ With a paucity of weapons, insurgents are less able to conduct and sustain attacks. When insurgents are unable to sustain a series of successful attacks, they become more likely to consider negotiations as a way of avoiding defeat.

HYPOTHESIS 2: *AN INSURGENCY WITH LIMITED OR NO SAFE HAVEN/SANCTUARY IS LESS CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS ON COIN FORCES*

Sanctuaries and safe havens can be used to train insurgents, stockpile weapons, plan operations, secure the organization’s leadership, and even establish a provisional government.⁹ Without access to sanctuaries or safe havens, insurgents are less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces. The Provisional IRA used safe havens in the Republic of Ireland for rest, recuperation, and planning, weapons storage, training, avoiding arrest and detection, and to recruit, fundraise, and lobby for political support. The LTTE used sanctuary in Tamil Nadu for training and logistics, the administration of organizational functions, and to develop a more robust military infrastructure. For the ANC, sanctuary was essential to the group’s survival. With a limited presence within South Africa proper, the insurgents relied on external sanctuaries in Mozambique and Angola for networking, political support, and the development of a rudimentary military infrastructure.

Sanctuary has also been a major factor in insurgencies in Malaya, Thailand, Mozambique, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, among others. Sealing the borders to blunt an insurgency is a COIN force imperative, but the reality is that borders are difficult to seal. Still, it

⁸ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.141.

⁹ Bard E. O’Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, eds., *Insurgency in the Modern World*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1980, p.15.

is not impossible. COIN forces in Turkey, Israel, India, Morocco, and France each successfully quelled insurgencies by closing down the border and eliminating external sanctuaries.¹⁰

HYPOTHESIS 3: *AN INSURGENCY WITH DEGRADED INTELLIGENCE IS LESS CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS ON COIN FORCES*

Intelligence, as it is defined in this research, is the information that insurgents need to identify a target, develop a plan to attack that target, and understand the ramifications that the attack will have for a range of actors, to include the host nation government and COIN force, the insurgents' supporters and wider constituency, and finally any powerful regional or international actors that may be involved in one way or another.¹¹ Insurgent organizations can follow either a minimalist model or a maximalist model of intelligence. The PIRA is an example of the former, with a nonexistent formal intelligence structure, emphasis on planning the next attack, and reliance on the Catholic community for snippets of important information. When the PIRA's intelligence network was infiltrated, it hampered the group's ability to conduct attacks and brought about a reevaluation of strategy, with senior members arguing that politics should replace armed struggle.

On the other side, Hizballah adheres to the maximalist model of intelligence, retaining the full spectrum of capabilities, including a robust SIGINT and HUMINT capability.¹² Hizballah relied heavily on its intelligence capabilities to conduct psychological operations, surveillance and reconnaissance, operations security, and for infiltration as a form of subversion.

¹⁰ Paul Staniland, "Defeating Transnational Insurgencies: The Best Offense is a Good Fence," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol.29, Iss.1, pp.22-23.

¹¹ Cragin and Daly, *Dynamic Threat*, pp.50-51.

¹² William Rosenau, "Understanding Insurgent Intelligence Operations," *Marine Corps University Journal*, Vol.2, No.1, Spring 2011, pp.15-18.

For its part, the ANC developed its intelligence capabilities to enhance its underground network, for surveillance and reconnaissance, infiltration into aspects of the South African security forces, and the harmonization of the group's military and political wings.

HYPOTHESIS 4: *AN INSURGENCY WITH UNABLE TO TRAIN ITS FIGHTERS OR TRANSFER TACIT KNOWLEDGE IS LESS CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS ON COIN FORCES*

As it would be for any soldier or fighter, training is a highly valued component of any insurgent's repertoire. Training requires both individuals with the technical knowledge or knowhow to train others, as well as an area where insurgents can train far from the watchful eye of the government. Deserts, jungles, and mountainous terrain all serve as ideal training areas for insurgents. But even more important than carving out the space to train, to truly hone their skills handling weapons, constructing bombs, and conducting surveillance and reconnaissance, insurgents need the technical expertise of individuals with practical experience. The internet or a beat up old version of *The Anarchist's Cookbook* can only take one so far.

The Provisional Irish Republican Army relied on training and the transfer of tacit knowledge for specialization, lethality, professionalism and image, networking and longevity. Hizballah, meanwhile, valued training for other reasons, including military prowess, recruitment, ideological support, expanding its international reach, and institutionalization through "train-the-trainer" programs. Like Hizballah, the ANC used training to aid its recruitment efforts, bolster military prowess and overall professionalization of its forces, and solidify its ideological support. Similar to the PIRA, the ANC depended on training to increase its operational tempo and conduct more lethal attacks against the COIN forces. The LTTE had highly trained cadres, particularly among the group's elite suicide commando unit.

HYPOTHESIS 5: AN INSURGENCY THAT STRUGGLES FINANCIALLY IS LESS CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING SUCCESSFUL ATTACKS ON COIN FORCES

To conduct successful attacks, insurgents need money. Money is used to pay the salaries of insurgents, purchase weapons and equipment, bribe corrupt officials, and provide for the families of killed or captured insurgents. There are many sources of financing available to insurgent groups, especially those willing to commit crimes. Sometimes an external state sponsor is instrumental in helping to finance an insurgency, exemplified by the case of Hizballah in Iran. Other times, as with the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, a diaspora community is responsible for providing significant financial assistance to an insurgent group. Crime, whether drug trafficking, kidnapping, or armed robbery, is yet another avenue available to some insurgents. During the insurgency in Angola, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) generated between \$80 and \$150 million a year from diamond smuggling and several other illicit activities.¹³ Other groups rely on extortion, or “revolutionary taxes,” as we have seen in Peru, Colombia, Uruguay, Spain, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Northern Ireland, to name just a few.

The PIRA relied on a continuous funding stream to pay the salaries of its members, acquire weapons and munitions, plan and prepare for operations, sustain the families of those fighters imprisoned or killed, and provide for the growth and maturation of its political wing, Sinn Fein. For the LTTE, financing was an important source of seed money for the group’s licit businesses, its organized criminal activities, and as a method of funding its legal and political aims. Moreover, without finances, the Tamil Tigers would never have been able to develop into a world class maritime operation.

¹³ Byman et al, *Trends in Outside Support*, p.88.

1.2.3.2 Organizational Tools

Organizational tools are the activities that sustain an insurgent group's existence as a cohesive entity.¹⁴ The hypotheses that follow are predicated upon the notion that, the less cohesive an insurgent group is, the less effective it will be in executing its strategy, tactics, planning, and organization. In turn, when insurgents are not unified, the leadership will be more likely to negotiate as a means of salvaging potential gains whilst avoiding outright defeat.

HYPOTHESIS 6: AN INSURGENCY WITH DEGRADED COMMAND AND CONTROL IS UNABLE TO SUSTAIN ITS EXISTENCE AS A COHESIVE ENTITY

Command and control is the mechanism by which insurgent groups plan, coordinate, and execute attacks.¹⁵ A command and control network functions according to how the group is organized, or its organizational structure. To ensure that attacks are executed properly, insurgent leaders seek to build a degree of redundancy into the network. However, the more people made aware of an operation, the greater chance there will be for the attack to be compromised as a result of a leak or penetration.¹⁶ How an insurgency is structured has implications for how it conducts operations and conversely, how it is countered. Organizational structure and design impacts a group's ability to both impart and import knowledge, the latter of which is critical to group survival.

An insurgency can be vertical or horizontal/networked. Vertical leadership has both its advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, in a vertically structured organization, once a

¹⁴ Cragin and Daly, *Dynamic Terrorist Threat*, p.25.

¹⁵ Cragin and Daly, *Dynamic Threat*, p.40.

¹⁶ G.H. McCormick and G. Gown, "Security and Coordination in Clandestine Organization," *Mathematical and Computer Modeling*, No.31, 2000, pp.175-192; J. Bowyer Bell, "Revolutionary Dynamics: The Inherent Inefficiency of the Underground," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.2, No.4, 1990, pp.193-211.

decision is made it is passed down and carried out with little friction. Subordinates understand their role and are keen to follow directions with a minimum amount of pushback. A major disadvantage, however, is that in a vertical organization, if a leader is lost (or in the case of an insurgency, eliminated through kill or capture), the organization will lack direction and guidance for a definite period of time. Even if a capable understudy steps in to fill the void, a period of transition will ensue, and some degree of resulting confusion is inevitable (this is not always the case, as FARC has exhibited relatively smooth succession).

Horizontal organizations, sometimes known as “flat,” “networked,” or “matrix” organizations are becoming increasingly common in the contemporary environment of information flows and technological innovation. In a horizontal organization, leadership is seen as a total system rather than the domain of a single people or small cadre of individuals. Like vertical organizations, horizontal organizations have both advantages and disadvantages. In a horizontal organization, more people have access and authority to decisions, which makes the vetting process more thorough, but can also prolong both reaching and implementing a decision. In an insurgency, horizontal networks are less prone to decapitation strikes, where the elimination of a charismatic leader of a group can be a crushing blow.¹⁷

Whether an insurgent organization adheres to a vertical or horizontal command and control structure, if the command and control (C²) network is disrupted or dismantled, the insurgents will be less likely to maintain their ability to exist as a cohesive entity. As a means of salvaging the group, negotiation becomes a more likely endeavor.

¹⁷ For more on the effectiveness of decapitation of leadership in counterinsurgency, see Jenna Jordan, “When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation,” *Security Studies*, Volume 18, 2009, pp. 719-755; also, Patrick Johnston, “The Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation in Counterinsurgency,” [http://iis-db.stanford.edu/evnts/5724/Johnston - Decapitation \(CISAC\).pdf](http://iis-db.stanford.edu/evnts/5724/Johnston_-_Decapitation_(CISAC).pdf), site accessed December 14, 2011; it is also worth mentioning Richard Friman’s work “Forging the Vacancy Chain: Law Enforcement Efforts and Mobility in Criminal Economies,” *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Volume 41, No.1, pp.53-77.

HYPOTHESIS 7: AN INSURGENCY WITH A HETEROGENEOUS GROUP COMPOSITION IS UNABLE TO SUSTAIN ITS EXISTENCE AS A COHESIVE ENTITY

The theoretical framework for my section on group composition and group dynamics is drawn from Cynthia Irvin's theory of militant nationalism, which categorizes members as ideologues, radicals, or politicos.

Ideologues are the "hard" men and women of militant nationalist organizations that are drawn more to action than political discussion and who believe that their goals can only be achieved through armed struggle, viewing non-violent struggle as futile. From a counterinsurgency perspective, these are the 'hardcore' members that must be killed or captured because they will not relent, and if left alone, they will continue to attack.

Radicals, like ideologues, prefer an active strategy to a passive one, but believe that armed struggle alone cannot achieve results. That said, radicals are both willing and able to call upon arms when they view it as necessary. For radicals, alliance formation is opportunistic and they are more likely than ideologues to see value in ideological diversity over strict dogmatic rigidity.¹⁸

Politicos see violence as both counterproductive and ostracizing to the group's supporters (both domestic and international) and roundly reject the notion that armed struggle can be used successfully to mobilize the masses. This group supports a strategy of base-building and political education, believing that influence can be measured in terms of real political power, not ideological purity.

The more homogenous a group is, the easier it will be to remain cohesive. Conversely,

¹⁸ John Darby, "Northern Ireland: The Persistence and Limitations of Violence," in *Conflict and Peacemaking in Multiethnic Societies*, ed. Joseph V. Montville, Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath, 1990, p.154.

when groups are highly polarized the result can be the emergence of “total spoilers” who seek absolute power and are unmoved by limited political concessions.¹⁹ Within this section of each case study, I explore the changing composition of groups and whether or not the COIN force sought to manipulate group composition to achieve its desired end. In order to understand how the balance of these typologies can shift, it is instructive to think of each typology as existing along a multidimensional cycle (see Figure 2 below).

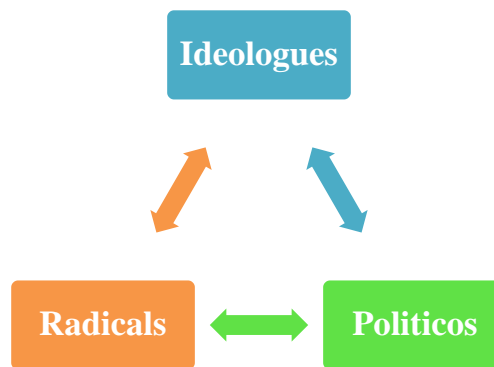


Figure 2: Militant Nationalism Cycle

An Additional Typology: Profiteers

Irvin does a laudable job in presenting the three categories of individuals that comprise an insurgency. However, to her typology, I would add a fourth group—profiteers. Profiteers are those insurgents who have participated in illegal activities to help fund the insurgency but have since been seduced by the lure of easy money. In turn, these insurgents become less concerned with ideology and enamored by profit. Tom Mockaitis has written extensively about the degeneration of an insurgent group into a criminal organization that operates under a veneer of

¹⁹ Stephen John Stedman, “Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes,” *International Security*, Vol.22, No.2, Fall 1997, pp.10-11.

militancy, with profit as the main objective.²⁰ David Keen's work on "useful enemies" describes conflict situations which are mutually beneficial to *both* the insurgents and the counterinsurgents. Illustrated through an analysis of insurgencies in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sri Lanka, Keen argues that for many belligerents, waging wars is often more profitable than winning them.²¹ As such, these conflicts drag on for much longer than they otherwise would have, as the line between adversaries is blurred in an attempt to squeeze every last ounce of profit from a resource-rich conflict zone.

H7a: Endless Conflict and the War Economy

The literature on resource generation in conflict has received much attention since the publication of Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler's widely received (and cited) study, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War."²² Put simply, Collier and Hoeffler argue that states that rely heavily on the export of primary commodities face a higher risk of civil war than resource-poor states. The "Greed and Grievance" study has led to a proliferation of follow on studies, each seeking to prove or disprove Collier and Hoeffler's findings.²³

Ballentine and Nitzschke recognize "the analytical limits that this dichotomy imposes on

²⁰ Mockaitis, "Resolving Insurgencies," p.37.

²¹ David Keen, *Useful Enemies: When Waging Wars is More Important Than Winning Them*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

²² Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. WPS 2355, May 2000.

²³ The most prominent of these studies are Halvard Buhaug and Scott Gates, "The Geography of Civil War," *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 39, no.4, 2002, pp.417-433; Indra de Soysa, "Paradise is a Bazaar? Greed, Creed, and Governance in Civil War, 1989-1999," *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 39, No.4, 2002, pp.395-416; Michael Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, "International Peacekeeping: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis," *American Political Science Review*, Volume 94, no.4, 2000, pp.779-801; James D. Fearon, "Why Do Some Civil Wars Last So Much Longer Than Others?" *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.41, no.3, 2004.

what are in reality highly complex systems of social interaction.”²⁴ Wennmann believes that instead of focusing on individual methods of conflict financing, conflict economies should be approached as a combination of financing strategies.²⁵ Berdal and Malone find that while resources were once a means of funding and waging armed conflict for states to a political end, contemporary armed conflict is being used as a means to individual commercial ends.²⁶ This trend toward profit and away from politics has important implications for how insurgencies are waged and countered. Furthermore, as Svante Cornell highlights, the transition from a focus on politics to profits can change both the group’s financial condition as well as its motivational structure.²⁷ “This in turn affects the evolution of the conflict, the development of the group itself, and the prospects of various measures of conflict resolution,” Cornell concludes.²⁸

Work by Michael L. Ross looks at how natural resources influence civil war and finds that while the presence of ‘lootable’ commodities like gemstones and drugs do not make conflicts more likely to commence, they do contribute to the duration of conflicts.²⁹ Richard Snyder’s research on ‘lootable’ wealth contributes a political economy of extraction framework, ultimately concluding that levels stability and disorder depend on four distinct institutional

²⁴ Karen Ballentine and Heiko Nitzschke, “Beyond Greed and Grievance: Policy Lessons from Studies in the Political Economy of Armed Conflict,” International Peace Academy Policy Report, October 2003, p.2.

²⁵ Achim Wennmann, “The Political Economy of Conflict Financing: A Comprehensive Approach beyond Natural Resources,” *Global Governance* Volume 13, 2007, pp.427-444.

²⁶ Mats Berdal and David M. Malone eds., *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000.

²⁷ Svante Cornell, “Narcotics and Armed Conflict: Interaction and Implications,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 30, 2007, p.212.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ See Michael L. Ross, “What Do We Know About Natural Resources and Civil War,” *Peace Research*, Vol.41, No.3, 2004, pp.337-356 and Michael L. Ross, “How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence From Thirteen Cases,” *International Organization*, Issue 58, Winter 2004, pp.35-67.

outcomes.³⁰ One particularly instructive finding of Snyder's research, and one with clear implications for contemporary insurgencies, is that as insurgents grow their wealth, exit strategies become more viable options. He cites the example of Burma, where he contends that had narcotics not been available as an exit option for rebels, the insurgency would likely have continued far longer than it actually did.

HYPOTHESIS 8: *AN INSURGENCY WITH A DOGMATIC ADHERENCE TO IDEOLOGY IS UNABLE TO SUSTAIN ITS EXISTENCE AS A COHESIVE ENTITY*

Ideology has been, and will continue to be, a way for insurgencies to gain recruits and amass popular support. Ideologies are crucial for insurgent groups because they explain the struggle to its followers and articulate a platform to resolve grievances, both perceived and real. As FM 3-24 notes, "the most powerful ideologies tap latent, emotional concerns of the populace," and can be based on religion, nationalists, ethnic, tribal, or cultural aspirations, a desire for justice or vengeance, or liberation from occupation.³¹ Writing over fifty years ago, Eric Hobsbawm alluded to the absence of a "common movement" as one of the major shortcomings of rebel groups.³² What he meant was that these groups lacked an innovative, shared, explicit ideology to motivate and mobilize the group's followers.³³ Thomas Marks sees a close linkage between leadership and ideology, which then connect to goals, noting, "If the ideological approach of the

³⁰ Richard Snyder, "Does Lootable Wealth Breed Disorder? A Political Economy of Extraction Framework," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.39, No.8, October 2006, pp.943-968. Snyder's four distinct institutional outcomes are private extraction, public extraction, joint extraction, and no extraction. His comparative study focuses on Sierra Leone and Burma.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1959.

³³ Raj Desai and Harry Eckstein, "The Transformation of Peasant Rebellion," *World Politics*, Vol.42, No.4, July 1990, p.454.

leadership is able to hold sway, insurgency will result. The movement will go on to pursue *political* goals, normally the effort to remake the system, either defensively (e.g. separatism) or offensively (e.g. revolutionary war, the purposive effort ‘to make a revolution’).³⁴ Is the group ideologically flexible, or rigidly dogmatic?

HYPOTHESIS 9: *AN INSURGENCY LACKING POPULAR SUPPORT IS UNABLE TO SUSTAIN ITS EXISTENCE AS A COHESIVE ENTITY*

Popular support for an insurgency has been the focus of scholars and practitioners of both insurgency and counterinsurgency alike. Indeed, Mao realized the importance of maintaining the good will of the population, not from an altruistic perspective but from a pragmatic standpoint. Sir Gerald Templer of the British military is credited with coining the term “hearts and minds,” during his tenure in the Malayan Emergency. Even today, the American military in Afghanistan stresses the avoidance of civilian casualties for fear of alienating the population and pushing Afghans closer to the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Avoiding backlash is critical to maintaining popular support. Scholars have noted that repression, especially the disproportionate use of force in response to an insurgency, can have the unintended effect of increasing support for an insurgency.³⁵ Argo contends that violence has a polarizing effect on the population and reprisals can easily elevate a low-level conflict into a

³⁴ Thomas Marks, “Ideology of Insurgency: New Ethnic Focus or Old Cold War Distortions?” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.15, No.1, Spring 2004, p.110.

³⁵ See Marks, “Ideology of Insurgency”; Nicholas I. Haussler., *Third Generation Gangs Revisited: The Iraq Insurgency*, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, Thesis, September 2005; Libicki et al., *Byting Back*. The phrase “disproportionate” use of force is a widely contested term and is often the cause of serious debate, especially in regards to Israeli responses to Palestinian or Lebanese violence.

more aggressive insurgency.³⁶ A dearth of economic opportunities, a repressive political culture, and a non-existent civil society also qualify as elements related to fertile ground for insurgency.³⁷ When the government is unwilling or unable to provide services to its population, insurgent groups can fill the void in this area, gaining legitimacy and popular support.

Popular support is also critical when considering the translation of passive support into more active forms, including recruitment into an organization. No insurgent organization can sustain itself without replenishing the ranks of its captured or killed. Like social movements, insurgent groups must attract members outside of their hardcore.³⁸ In sum, avoiding backlash from the community, recruiting members from outside the initial core group, and providing social services can all contribute to popular support, which enables the insurgency to sustain its existence as a cohesive entity, making negotiations less likely.

HYPOTHESIS 10: AN INSURGENCY WITH NO PUBLIC RELATIONS/PROPAGANDA CAPABILITIES IS UNABLE TO SUSTAIN ITS EXISTENCE AS A COHESIVE ENTITY

In the battle for hearts and minds, insurgents are aware that media and public relations efforts are important tools in winning the battle of perception. Publicity allows insurgents to promote their

³⁶ Nicole Argo, "The Role of Social Context in Terrorist Attacks," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 13, 2006.

³⁷ On a lack of economic opportunity, see Richard Clutterbuck, "Peru, Cocaine, Terrorism, and Corruption," *International Relations*, Vol.12, No.5, 1995, pp.77-92 and Robert Looney, "The Business of Insurgency: The Expansion of Iraq's Shadow Economy," *The National Interest*, fall 2005, pp.1-6; on a repressive political culture, see Austin T. Turk, "Sociology of Terrorism," *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol.30, 2004, pp.271-286; on the lack of a civil society, see David Boynes and James David Ballard, "Developing a Sociological Theory for the Empirical Understanding of Terrorism," *The American Sociologist*, Summer 2004, pp.5-25.

³⁸ Michael P. Boyle et al., "Expressive Responses to News Stories about Extremist Groups: A Framing Experiment," *Journal of Communication*, Vol.56, No.2, 2006, pp.271-288.

ideology, galvanize supporters, and disseminate their message to a wide audience. In general, insurgents target three primary audiences through their public relations campaigns: their own members and constituents, supporters outside the group, and enemy forces.

Political support is not limited to the insurgency itself. External sponsors can provide insurgents with a range of political support. This support can be diverse and includes: access to a state's diplomatic apparatus, vocal support for recognition in the international arena, persuading NGOs and charities to provide support to the group directly, and even denying support to the government opposing the insurgents.³⁹

1.2.4 Contextual Factors/Condition Variables

Goals & Objectives

The goals and objectives of an insurgency can be divided along strategic, operational, and tactical lines and can be physical or psychological.⁴⁰ The strategic objective of an insurgency is its desired end state, be that the unification of two separate countries into one, the separation of one whole country into two (or more) distinct entities, or a host of other social, political, economic, or religiously inspired goals. Operational objectives are those that insurgents pursue to erode the legitimacy of the ruling power while attempting to establish their desired end state.⁴¹ Tactical objectives are the immediate aims of insurgent acts.⁴² How broadly or narrowly defined an insurgent group's objectives are defined will play a role in whether or not a group is willing to

³⁹ Byman et al, *Trends in Outside Support*, pp.88-89.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.25.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

negotiate. Are goals fungible? How much is the group willing to compromise? In each case study, I seek to explore the malleability of insurgent goals and objectives, and examine how and why goals change over time.

Seminal Events

Though the lion's share of the attention has been bestowed upon Malcolm Gladwell for popularizing the term *tipping point* and introducing it into everyday lexicon, Thomas Schelling deserves credit because he was writing about the idea nearly three decades before Gladwell's book was released. In *Micromotives and Macrobehavior*, Schelling frames the notion of tipping in a discussion of neighborhood migration. The phenomenon was first observed as minorities moved into previously homogenous neighborhoods. This caused some families and individuals in the neighborhood to leave, leading to more openings, which were then filled by more minorities. The process continued until a tipping point was reached, thus accelerating the process of migration by the original group, moving out of the neighborhood in droves until African-Americans replaced Italian Americans, or Hispanics replaced Jews, Poles, or Irish.

Schelling mentions both "tipping in" and "tipping out," which meant that not only was the departure of whites induced by the appearance of minorities in the neighborhood, but minorities would then be attracted to the neighborhood because of the presence of minorities already there. These processes involve expectations, as "people do not wait until the alien colony exceeds their toleration before departing, nor do the minority entrants wait until comfort has been achieved, as long as they can foresee the numbers increasing with any confidence."⁴³

⁴³ Thomas C. Schelling, *Micromotives and Macrobehaviors*, New York: W.W. Norton, 1978, p.101.

In sum, the tipping model is a special case, a broad class of special cases or critical mass phenomena.⁴⁴

Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

The final piece to the theoretical puzzle involves conflict resolution. After all, this study is concerned with groups that either negotiate with the government or disavow this path in favor of continuing to fight. Yet talks with insurgents are often precarious from the point of view of the government. Negotiating with an insurgent group that has killed and injured hundreds of civilians, soldiers, and government officials can be politically expedient from the perspective of ending the conflict and addressing the demands of public opinion, especially in a democracy where continuing the conflict may amount to political suicide. However, brokering such a deal is also fraught with risk. Negotiations can, and often do, fail and backfire. Furthermore, talks confer a sense of legitimacy on insurgents and may discredit other groups who have long been calling for peace, thus creating the impression that violence has been rewarded.⁴⁵

The conflict resolution literature is voluminous and as such, much of it falls outside of the scope of this research. However, there is a subset of the literature that deals with negotiations between non-state actors and host-nation governments which will be examined briefly in this section.⁴⁶ Deciding when and how to begin negotiations is a delicate process. Sometimes,

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Daniel Byman, "Talking with Insurgents: A Guide for the Perplexed," *Washington Quarterly*, Volume 32, Issue 2, April 2009, p.125.

⁴⁶ Even though it deals with ethnic civil wars and not insurgency, per se, and although I disagree with many of the paper's findings, for a thorough and well-researched account of the difficulty of reaching negotiated settlements in ethnic civil wars, see Alexander B. Downes, "The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars," *Security Studies*, vol.13, no.4, Summer 2004, pp.230-279.

insurgent groups can see negotiations as a sign of weakness, and use the down time of a cease-fire to rearm and regroup, growing stronger and more deadly as a result. If undertaken unilaterally, negotiations can cause a rift between allies who, for political reasons, may be unable to negotiate.⁴⁷

Even though initiating talks with insurgents can be risky for elected leaders, history is rife with examples of the potential rewards of engagement. Moreover, even if talks do not immediately achieve the desired outcome of ending the insurgency, they may have an effect on the insurgent group's constituency. Whether suffering from conflict fatigue or simply hoping that the talks might lead to peace or other benefits, negotiations can increase pressure on insurgents to eschew violence or risk losing many of the benefits accorded by both passive and active supporters. Just the mere subject of negotiations can lead a group to splinter, sowing dissent within an insurgent group's ranks as cleavages emerge between those committed to violence and those who see the promise of peace.⁴⁸ An unwelcome byproduct of insurgent group splintering is that members of the rump group that emerges from the "mother" organization can be even more violent than the group that spawned it, as Audrey Kurth Cronin notes, "responding to the imperative to demonstrate their existence and signal their dissent."⁴⁹

Another interesting study on conflict resolution and war termination is Roy Licklider's

⁴⁷ Peter C. Sederberg, "Conciliation as Counter-Terrorist Strategy," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.32, no.3, 1995, pp.295-312.

⁴⁸ See Martha Crenshaw, "How Terrorism Declines," *Terrorism Research and Public Policy*, vol.3, no.1, Spring 1991, pp.69-87 and Crenshaw's "How Terrorism Ends," *United States Institute of Peace Special Report*, no.48, Washington D.C.: USIP, May 25, 1999.

⁴⁹ Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How Al Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," in Robert J. Art and Kenneth Waltz eds., *The Use of Force: Military Power and International Politics*, 7th edition, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009, p.515.

study of civil wars between 1945 and 1993. In it, the author tests Harrison Wagner's hypothesis that negotiated settlements are likely to dissolve because segments of power-sharing government retain the capacity for resorting to civil war while outright military victory decimates the losers' organization, making it difficult to resume a conflict.⁵⁰ Caroline Hartzell makes a compelling argument by considering issues of context and complexity through an examination of factors such as superpower conflict, group identities, and third party guarantors.⁵¹ Hartzell finds that those negotiated settlements that provide institutional guarantees for the security threats faced by antagonists, are those more likely to have staying power.⁵² What do current models of conflict resolution tell us about the internal and external dynamics that lead a group to resolve a conflict? What are the information requirements necessary for a COIN force or government to finally reach the crucial decision to negotiate with perennial adversaries and potentially allow insurgents a legitimate change at entering the governing structure? What factors make these agreements more or less durable?

Finally, it is worth mentioning that there is an element of the "shadow of the future" argument involved. The shadow of the future is actually positive for cooperation because it allows players to escape the prisoners' dilemma by using conditional retaliation strategies. Where repeated interaction is expected, adversaries can sustain cooperation in certain situations, even if they couldn't have in a one-time interaction. This means that previous attempts at

⁵⁰ Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993," *American Political Science Review*, Vol.89, No.3, September 1995, pp.681-690.

⁵¹ Caroline A. Hartzell, "Explaining the Stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.43, No.1, February 1999, pp.3-22.

⁵² Ibid.

conflict resolution are important as repeated interactions, which familiarize the sides with each other and help facilitate future negotiations, at least in theory.

Ripeness Theory and the Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS)

Ripeness theory and the mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) are conflict resolution theories advanced by I. William Zartman, who sees ripe moments as providing an opening for negotiations. Ripe moments arise when adversaries are locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory. It is important to emphasize that the stalemate must be painful for *both* sides, that is, it must be mutual although not necessarily in equal degree or for the same reasons.⁵³ Both sides need to experience the pain of a stalemate for the conflict to reach a turning point. Other sources of turning points, according to Zartman, include an inconclusive victory, an inconclusive defeat, a bloody standoff that suddenly brings costs home, a loss of foreign support or an increase in foreign pressure, or a shift of fortunes that weakens the stronger side or strengthens the weaker.⁵⁴ The notion of the mutually hurting stalemate is a condition variable (contextual factor) that governs the magnitude of the impact the IVs (operational tools, organizational tools) have on the DV (the decision insurgents make of whether or not to negotiate) and thus contributes to our understanding of the conditions under which negotiations take place. In cases where the insurgents' operational tools and/or organizational tools have limited their ability to attack or remain as a cohesive group, the presence of a MHS exacerbates

⁵³ I. William Zartman, "The Timing of Peace Initiatives: Hurting Stalemate and Ripe Moments," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics*, Vol.1, No.1, September 2001, pp.8-18.

⁵⁴ I. William Zartman, ed., *Elusive Peace: Negotiating an End to Civil Wars*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1995, p.18.

these factors and makes the likelihood of negotiation infinitely greater than it would have been otherwise.

Decision-Making Structure and Process

Different disciplines approach decision making in insurgent groups in various ways. Brian A. Jackson's work on social science for counter-terrorism conducts a wide survey of the literature in this area and connects the dots between several fields. Sandler and Enders approach decision making within insurgent groups from an economic perspective, arguing that the choices a group makes can be explained by their perceived utility, based on assumed costs and benefits.⁵⁵ An older but still relevant analysis from social psychology by Moscovici and Zavalloni can be applied to insurgent group decision through the lens of group polarization, which examines the tendency of people to make decisions that are more "extreme" when they are in a group, in contrast to a decision reached independently or in isolation.⁵⁶ Political scientists correctly consider the issue of context, organizational theorists look at how differences in organizational design and functioning can affect decision making, and game theoretical approaches seek to explain decision making through the effects of competition and other dynamics on group choices.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Todd Sandler and Walter Enders, "An Economic Perspective on Transnational Terrorism," *European Journal of Political Economy*, Vol.20, No.2, 2004, pp.301-316.

⁵⁶ Serge Moscovici and Marisa Zavalloni, "The Group as a Polarizer of Attitudes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.12, No.2, 1969, pp.125-135.

⁵⁷ See Gordon McCormick, "Terrorist Decision Making," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol.6, No.1, 2003, pp.473-507; Sun-Ki Chai, "An Organizational Economics Theory of Antigovernment Violence," *Comparative Politics*, Vol.26, No.1, 1993, pp.99-110; and Todd Sandler and M. Daniel G. Arce, "Terrorism & Game Theory," *Simulation & Gaming*, Vol.34, No.3, 2003, pp.319-337.

1.2.5 The Dependent Variable: Why Do Insurgents Negotiate?

As stated above, my central thesis is that insurgents are more likely to negotiate an end to the conflict when they are unable to sustain a series of successful attacks (operational tools) and/or they are unable to sustain their existence as a cohesive entity (organizational tools). Therefore, the dependent variable in this study is the decision that the insurgents make of whether or not to negotiate. As Van Evera notes, a dependent variable (DV) is a variable framing the caused phenomenon of a causal theory or hypothesis.⁵⁸ While there is an entire genre of the literature that deals specifically with the relative stability or instability of negotiated settlements to civil wars (itself a sub-section of the literature on war termination), this research is concerned with how negotiations unfold between insurgents and counterinsurgents and what lessons can be drawn from these negotiations.⁵⁹

Dean Pruitt's research looks at various strategies for dealing with terrorists, including: capitulating, combating, isolating, mainstreaming, and negotiating. This final category of negotiating, or seeking an agreement that will end the terrorists' campaign, examines the role of backchannel talks, third party mediation, and the development of flexibility by both the terrorists and the authorities.⁶⁰ Pruitt believes that encouraging flexibility is the most significant

⁵⁸ Van Evera, *Guide to Methods*, pp.11-13.

⁵⁹ This includes Alexander B. Downes, "The Problem with Negotiated Settlements to Ethnic Civil Wars," *Security Studies*, 13:4, Summer 2004, pp.230-279; Caroline A. Hartzell, "Explaining the Stability of Negotiated Settlements to Intrastate Wars," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 43:3, 1999, pp.3-22; Roy Licklider, "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars, 1945-1993," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol.89, No.3, September 1995, pp.681-690; and Monica Duffy Toft, "Ending Civil Wars: A Case for Rebel Victory?" *International Security*, Vol.34, No.4, Spring 2010, pp.7-36, and Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, pp.35-72.

⁶⁰ Dean Pruitt, "Negotiation with Terrorists," *International Negotiation*, 11: 371-394, 2006.

determinant of success in negotiating with terrorists and insurgents. My own findings dovetail nicely with Pruitt's analysis. This research suggests that group composition is a critical variable when assessing the relative flexibility or rigidity of an insurgent organization. The more contact with and dependence upon moderates within an insurgent group, the more likely this group will be to pull away from the "extreme strands," or the ideologues, and move toward a position where concession making becomes possible.⁶¹

In "Setting a Place at the Table," Heather S. Gregg asks the question, "should insurgents be brought into the political process and, if so, under what conditions?" Her analysis relies on a comparison of the Provisional IRA and Hizballah and argues that, under certain conditions, allowing insurgents into the political process can be a useful tool in helping to end insurgencies. Gregg lists four benefits of offering insurgents a role in the government, including⁶²:

- Provides insurgents an alternative means for altering the status quo and offers them a political stake in the country
- Holds insurgents accountable to their rhetoric and promises
- Draws insurgents into the open and subjects them to the rules and laws of the government
- Reduces the need for long-term third party interlocutors

These four benefits of offering insurgents a role in government come with a caveat. Bringing insurgents into the political process as a means of enervating political violence in the country must occur under five conditions. First, all sides involved in the fighting—government, insurgents, population—must agree that the conflict cannot be solved militarily. If even one of the primary actors in the conflict believes that military means can tip the balance in its favor, it will be tempted to continue resorting to violence as a tool.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.384.

⁶² Heather S. Gregg, "Setting a Place at the Table: Ending Insurgencies through the Political Process," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.22, Iss.4, pp.644-645.

Second, full disarmament by the insurgents should occur toward the end of the negotiation process and not be listed as a precondition for talks. Stripping insurgents of their weapons immediately alters the military stalemate. Especially in countries with a long history of sectarian violence, disarming one side in the conflict would leave that constituency defenseless.

Third, the government must recognize the popular legitimacy of the insurgents and address the grievances of the insurgency's base of support. It is impossible to kill or capture each and every insurgent while suppressing the group's supporters.

Fourth, the political infrastructure of the government must be sound. If government institutions are weak, absorbing insurgents into the political process could cause a government to collapse and reignite violence.

Finally, the government and the insurgents should agree on an amnesty program that at once allows some insurgent leaders to join the government while barring those individuals known to have committed egregious human rights abuses or other acts unacceptable to the population at large.⁶³ Gregg's analysis is useful for thinking about the COIN force perspective, but her findings only make sense insofar as the insurgents are willing to negotiate, too. In my study of the PIRA, Hizballah, the LTTE, and the ANC, I found that a combination of operational tools (funding/financing, sanctuary) and organizational tools (group composition, popular support), when considered in concert with a mutually hurting stalemate, are the variables most likely to convince the insurgents to negotiate an end to the conflict.

Proto-insurgencies, as discussed earlier, are small cadres of belligerents who seek to develop their campaigns into full-blown insurgencies.⁶⁴ If identified as a problem by the

⁶³ Ibid, pp.659-660.

⁶⁴ Byman, "Proto Insurgencies," p.vii.

government and dealt with using the appropriate resources, it is this nascent stage of the conflict where insurgencies are most vulnerable to defeat. Research on insurgency and the opening of peace processes by political scientist Navin Bapat poses the question, “when do governments and insurgents reach the bargaining table?”⁶⁵ To answer this question, Bapat uses a game theoretic model which integrates factors from bargaining theory, domestic institutions, and balance of power to construct a general explanation of the timing of negotiation. Bapat concludes that if the counterinsurgents fail to crush the proto-insurgency, they will be forced to negotiate under less favorable circumstances at some point later in the conflict. If these negotiations then fail, the window of opportunity will close and the insurgents may develop an aura of invulnerability, which leads the group to eschew future negotiations all together.⁶⁶

While Bapat does not go into detail on what happens when the counterinsurgents *do* crush the insurgency, again, my findings demonstrate that in the four cases I analyzed, it was a combination of operational tools (funding/financing, sanctuary) and organizational tools (group composition, popular support) accompanied by the pain of a mutually hurting stalemate that is most likely to bring the insurgents to the table.

Any review of the literature on negotiation between states and insurgents must include Daniel Byman’s research on the subject. In two separate articles, Byman details “lessons for policymakers” and lays out “a guide for the perplexed.” In his 2005 *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* article, Byman focuses on helping policymakers ask the right questions about the windfalls and pitfalls of talking to insurgents. He lists several interesting questions, such as “Are

⁶⁵ Navin A. Bapat, “Insurgency and the Opening of Peace Processes,” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.42, no.6, 2005, p.699.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 699-717.

the leaders ideologically rigid?” (which I analyze in the group composition section) and “Who wins a fair election?”⁶⁷ Before delving into the potential rewards of engagement, Byman details a range of options for governments to consider when engaging in talks with insurgents, including the use of declarations, media interviews, trusted intermediaries, intelligence agents, and diplomats.⁶⁸ He concludes his “guide for the perplexed” by offering a synopsis of the costs and benefits of negotiating with insurgents:

Talks with insurgents are politically costly, usually fail, and can often backfire. Nevertheless, they are often necessary to end conflicts and transform an insurgent group into a legitimate political actor or wean the group away from violence. Policymakers and analysts alike must recognize that the conditions for success are elusive. This should make them cautious about initiating talks in general, but also eager to seize on potential opportunities should the stars align and the insurgent groups become ready to make a fundamental change and move away from violence. Pouncing on such an opportunity requires both political dexterity to do what was once unthinkable and a long-term view that accepts both the possibility of real change as well as the risks of failure.⁶⁹

No counterinsurgent force enters a conflict believing that it will be defeated. On the contrary, whether the Soviets in Afghanistan, the Americans in Vietnam, or the French in Algeria, strong national militaries often believe victory is imminent and in accordance, strategy is designed to achieve that outcome. But as I detail throughout this dissertation, insurgency outcomes only rarely favor one side completely over the other. Even in victory, it is rare for the

⁶⁷ Daniel Byman, “The Decision to Begin Talks with Terrorists,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:5, 2005, p.409.

⁶⁸ Daniel Byman, “Talking with Insurgents: A Guide for the Perplexed,” *The Washington Quarterly*, 32:2, 2009, pp.126-127.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p.136.

side that prevails get everything they wanted. Negotiated settlements are far more common and typically involve amnesties, concessions, and reforms. The 2 X 2 matrix below, displayed in Figure 3, details the four insurgency outcomes.

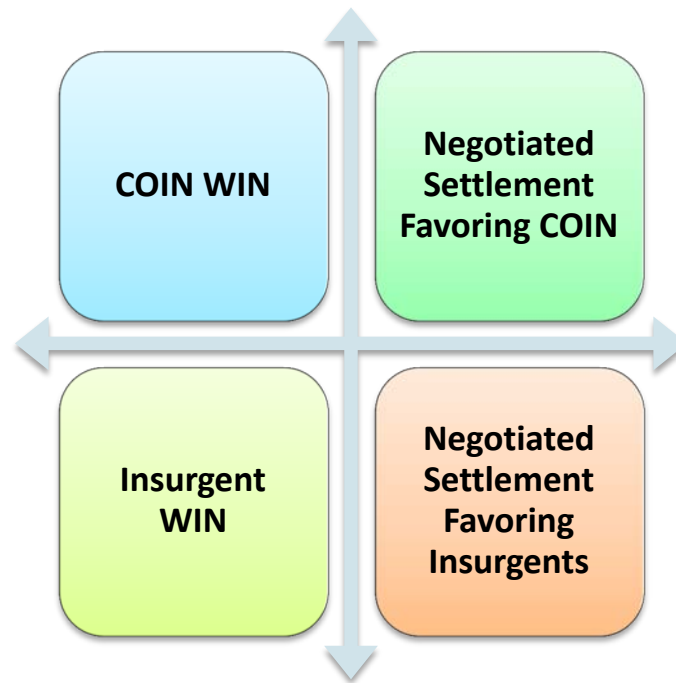


Figure 3: Conflict Outcomes

Win, lose, or draw, insurgents negotiate when they are unable to sustain a series of successful attacks (operational tools) and/or they are unable to sustain their existence as a cohesive entity (organizational tools). These conditions are magnified when the insurgents are locked in a mutually hurting stalemate with the COIN force.

1.3 SCOPE

Four major cases will examine insurgencies in Northern Ireland (Provisional Irish Republican Army), Lebanon (Hizballah), Sri Lanka (Tamil Tigers), and South Africa (ANC). My final case study will focus on the Taliban, attempting to relate “lessons learned” from the four cases examined to the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan. Each case study chapter will follow the same format. I will begin by providing a brief history of the conflict before delving into issues relating to the insurgency itself. After establishing a historical foundation, I will provide the strategic/operating logic of the group, or its’ *raison d’etre*. Next, I will describe the approach adopted by the insurgents before moving on to a discussion of the counterinsurgent force.

The crux of the chapter will focus on a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the insurgent group’s resources, leadership, composition, and decision-making process. Each of these variables will be weighed against the backdrop of the geopolitical context, exploring the complexities facing both the insurgents and the COIN force throughout the course of the conflict. Finally, I will probe the terminal stages of the insurgency and attempt to dissect the conflict resolution process (broadly defined) in an effort to discern a tipping point toward or away from negotiations. The guiding questions of the overall study will help to generate cross case comparison observations.

2.0 THE PROVISIONAL IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY (PIRA)

2.1 BRIEF HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) emerged from the struggles of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s.⁷⁰ And while the group itself was original in many ways, it was also the continuation of a militant Irish Republican movement that traced its legacy back to the 1790s, when Theobald Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen formed a “brotherhood of affection, a communion of rites and union of power among Irishmen of every religious persuasion.”⁷¹ The Provisionals, or “Provos” for short, did share some similarities with Wolfe Tone’s United Irishmen, but for the most part the PIRA was a much different organization than what the United Irishmen had been 180 years earlier.

Throughout its thirty-year tenure, the PIRA was regarded as a sophisticated, well-disciplined, and ruthless insurgent organization. Its number one mission was to jettison British influence from Northern Ireland and establish a ‘united Ireland’ together with the 26 counties flanking its southern border with the Republic of Ireland (ROI). The group formed during a time of escalating violence in Ulster’s six northern counties. Catholics led country-wide civil rights

⁷⁰ On the origins of the Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) and a historical background to Irish terrorism, see Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA*, New York: Palgrave, 2000.

⁷¹ Coogan, *The IRA*, p.5.

protests in the late-1960s which were influenced in part by the African-American civil rights movement in the United States.⁷² If civil rights provided the PIRA with the framework for its initial organization, long-standing Catholic grievances in areas like employment, housing, and politics served as the catalyst for mobilization.

Much like the Original Irish Republican Army (OIRA), its immediate predecessor, the PIRA was influenced by Marxism and Socialism and much of this rhetoric is imbued in the group's writings and ideology. In theory, this should have led Catholics to co-opt the Protestant working class into its ranks and frame the conflict in terms of social status, not ethnicity or religion. After all, from an economic perspective, working class Catholics and working class Protestants had more in common with each other than either did with the Unionist elite. But shortly after Catholic-Protestant skirmishes throughout the North became common occurrences, the PIRA adopted a fervently nationalist tone to its statements.⁷³ As sectarian violence spread, the PIRA became the *de facto* protector of the Catholic communities in the traditional strongholds of West Belfast, Derry, and South Armagh.⁷⁴ Compared with the OIRA, the PIRA was prepared to use force, where necessary, to protect Catholics from Loyalist violence and security force intimidation.

⁷² Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p.98.

⁷³ The insurgency literature routinely characterizes the PIRA as an ethno-nationalist group. In Northern Ireland, this ethno-nationalism consisted of Irish Catholics (also known as Republicans or Nationalists) and Protestants who associated themselves with Great Britain and the United Kingdom (commonly referred to as Unionists or Loyalists). To use further parsimony for the sake of clarity, Unionists were middle to upper class Protestants while Loyalists were primarily working class Protestants.

⁷⁴ Contrary to popular opinion, Loyalist paramilitary groups like the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) actually predated the PIRA, not the other way around. The UVF was formed by Edward Carson in 1913 as an armed militia with the stated intent to prevent the British Government from granting Ireland Home Rule. See Peter Taylor, *Loyalists: War and Peace in Northern Ireland*, New York: TV Books, 1999, pp.2-9.

2.1.1 Operating Logic

The operating logic of the Provos is far from monolithic although common themes of defense, revenge, and anti-imperialism characterize its ethos. The self-image of the group is based upon its role as a protector of the Catholic community and “this has remained a central part of the IRA’s self-image throughout the troubles, and of wider republican perception of the organization.”⁷⁵ “The issue to start with is defense and the members’ self-image as necessary defenders: the immediate context for the creation of the Provisionals was one that pointed to a stark need for some kind of Catholic self-protection in the North,” according to Richard English.⁷⁶ During what is known throughout Northern Ireland as “marching season,” Catholic and Protestant groups parade through each other’s territory to sing songs that recall the glory of their forefathers in battles past. These antagonistic displays of nationalism only exacerbated latent feelings of ill will on both sides and though the security forces maintained a presence to prevent clashes, violence during these provocative marches was always inevitable.

By the late 1960s, the Catholic community had come to believe that it was unable to rely on a predominantly Protestant police force—the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)—to act in an impartial manner and protect it from the violence that engulfed Northern Ireland throughout this

⁷⁵ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.338. For more on the defensive function of the PIRA, see Timothy Shanahan, *The Provisional Irish Republican Army and the Morality of Terrorism*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, pp.23-32.

⁷⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.120. There is a slippery slope from protector to predator, as often times insurgent groups begin as protectors of a community only to morph at a later stage into predators, preying on the same community they had sworn to protect. See William K. Reno, “Sovereign Predators and Non-State Armed Group Protectors?” paper presented at Curbing Human Rights Violations of Armed Groups Conference, UBC Centre of International Relations, November 2003.

period.⁷⁷ Not surprisingly, the all-Protestant RUC and its counterpart, the Ulster Defense Regiment (UDR), engaged in connivance and collusion with the various Protestant paramilitary outfits in Ulster. So this responsibility to protect and defend, especially in the early weeks and months of the insurgency, was probably a more common motivation for those who joined the PIRA than any broader republican aspirations or ideological fervor that would later characterize the group.⁷⁸

In 1969, the British Army was deployed to Northern Ireland under Operation 'Banner' to serve as a barrier between the two feuding communities. Initially, the Catholic minority was relieved that a professional military force had been dispatched under the auspices of a peacekeeping force. But these feelings of relief proved to be short-lived. Following a series of aggressive searches, street clashes, and widespread arrests, the relationship between the British Army and the Catholic population in Northern Ireland soon soured. "The year following mid-1969 saw Catholic Belfast and Derry turn substantially against the soldiers, the latter's harshness helping to intensify and extend that very subversion against which it was supposedly employed."⁷⁹ In early July 1970, in order to quell some of the street skirmishes that were breaking out between Catholics and Protestants, the British Army imposed a curfew on the Falls Road, a predominantly Catholic section of West Belfast. In a three-day period, four civilians

⁷⁷ Marching Season takes place in July in Northern Ireland and is typically thought of as a display of Protestant nationalism, as the Orange Order marches through predominantly Catholic areas to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne. The marches are almost always met with violence from Nationalists who view the parades as incendiary and provocative. See Neil Jarman, *Material Conflicts: Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*, Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997, accessed online at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/parade/jarman.htm>, as of January 18, 2012; on the composition of the RUC, see Ronald Weitzer, *Policing Under Fire: Ethnic Conflict and Police-Community Relations in Northern Ireland*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp.37-42.

⁷⁸ Andrew Garfield, "PIRA Lessons Learned: A Model of Terrorist Leadership Succession," *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement*, Vol.11, No.2/3, Winter 2002, p.275.

⁷⁹ For more on subversion and insurgency, see William Rosenau, "Subversion and Insurgency," Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2007.

were killed and 60 injured, 1600 canisters of CS anti-riot tear gas were fired into the neighborhood, and 58 allegations of looting and other misconduct against British troops were reported.⁸⁰

British soldiers sent to Northern Ireland were trained for peacekeeping, not counterinsurgency. Notwithstanding, only months after their arrival the soldiers found themselves unprepared for a mission that they had not trained for and had little desire to fight. Precisely because the mission was peacekeeping and not COIN, there was no effort to win the popular support of the Catholic population. This lack of awareness was evident in the inability of the COIN force to establish even a veneer of neutrality. Homes in Catholic neighborhoods were subjected to raids and ransacked while troops searched for weapons. Occupants in automobiles were stopped and searched, while pedestrians on the street were harassed and humiliated. Between 1971 and 1975, the British Army employed the use of 'P-tests,' which involved stopping civilians at random to ask about personal details including family profile, social life, employment, etc.⁸¹ Meanwhile, highly combustible events like the Protestant Orange parades were allowed to continue unchecked.⁸² Despite the likelihood that these parades would end in sectarian violence, the administration in Stormont threatened "ferocious reprisals against anyone who tried to impede them."⁸³

⁸⁰ Paul Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds'? British Counter-Insurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.32, No.3, June 2009, p.455.

⁸¹ Keith Jeffrey, "Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency Operations: Some Reflections on the British Experience," *Intelligence and National Security*, Iss.1, Vol.2, 1987, p.132.

⁸² Thomas H. Henriksen, "What Really Happened in Northern Ireland's Counterinsurgency: Revision and Revelation," Joint Special Operations University Report, 08-5, October 2008, p.22.

⁸³ Anthony James Joes, *Urban Guerilla Warfare*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2007, p.113.

The final element of the PIRA's operating logic was an anti-imperialist message that became a salient part of the group's nascent political platform. Just as EOKA insurgents had done in Cyprus and Irgun terrorists had done in Palestine, the PIRA would use violence as the centerpiece of its strategy.⁸⁴ Liberating Irish Catholics from centuries of British rule could not be achieved without violence, the group argued. History served as its guide. Indeed, the PIRA was greatly encouraged by the British retreat from Aden in 1970 following eight years of insurgency against Yemeni rebels.⁸⁵ In a nod to Mao, the PIRA's Army Council adopted a three-pronged strategy of defense, followed by defense and retaliation, and finally a sustained offensive against the British in a guerilla campaign.⁸⁶

2.1.2 Type of Insurgency

The insurgency in Northern Ireland has been categorized as a "Local-international" insurgency. In other words, the PIRA received external support, but the outcome of the insurgency was basically decided parochially—according to local factors, by local insurgents, and involving the local population. To be sure, various elements of the insurgency had an international dimension—money raised in America, arms procured from Libya, insurgents trained in Latin America, and operations executed in Europe. Still, at the end of the day, the insurgency came down to Irish versus British, Catholics versus Protestants, Nationalists versus Unionists, and

⁸⁴ EOKA is short for the National Organization of Cypriot Fighters.

⁸⁵ An article in the *Republican News*, the PIRA's Belfast paper, from 1 September 1973 referred to the British decision to leave Aden as "the most humiliating defeat the British Army has suffered in the twentieth century." English, *Armed Struggle*, p.124.

⁸⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.125.

Republicans versus Loyalists. The interaction of multiple actors in the conflict was but one of several important factors that served to prolong its duration well beyond the ten- year average duration of post-WWII insurgencies.⁸⁷

2.1.3 Approach

The Provisional Irish Republican Army exemplified the quintessential prototype of the urban approach to insurgency, as outlined in its training manual *The Green Book*. In some of the border counties though, including the more rural areas like Derry, the group adopted techniques more in line with the rural-urban approach to insurgency that relies heavily on ambushes and sniper attacks. Part of the PIRA's sophistication derived from its ability to avoid a "one-size-fits-all" approach. The group was equally comfortable operating in the back alleys of Belfast and the bogs of South Armagh.⁸⁸

The urban approach to insurgency espouses the use of terrorist tactics in an urban environment, such as targeting an adversary's critical infrastructure, killing government and opposition leaders, and intimidating police and military forces in order to limit their ability to respond to attacks.⁸⁹ This approach has two major tactical considerations. First, while

⁸⁷ One of the main findings of a recent RAND study on insurgency is that a complex insurgency will lead to a complex and *protracted* ending. In other words, insurgencies with more than two clear parties (in this case, the PIRA, the British, and the Loyalists) involved have longer, more violent and more complex endings. See Ben Connable and Martin Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2010, p.27.

⁸⁸ On the urban-rural component of insurgency, see Thomas A. Marks, "Urban Insurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Volume 14, Issue 3, Autumn 2003, pp.100-157.

⁸⁹ The PIRA was responsible for the murder of several top officials in the British government, including Lord Earl Mountbatten, the former Chief of the IK Defense Staff and cousin of the Queen of England. Coogan, *The IRA*, pp.470-474. The group also targeted Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and nearly succeeded in killing her during the bombing of the Brighton Hotel in 1984 which resulted in the death of five people and thirty injured, see English, *Armed Struggle*, p.248.

engagements are still short-range and fleeting, as in classical insurgency, the added element of civilian bystanders is now introduced.⁹⁰ This usually favors insurgents, who can blend in with the population and then blame the security forces for collateral damage. Second, the presence of media is more prevalent in cities compared with the countryside.⁹¹ This provides the insurgents with the publicity to advertise their campaign. A media presence also means that COIN actions are increasingly scrutinized and questioned. More importantly, mistakes are magnified, increasing the opportunities for important propaganda victories on the part of insurgents.⁹²

The PIRA is credited with developing the concept of “lethality self- limit,” an approach that favored improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to compensate for rifle-based tactics, which required more fighters, amassed fewer kills, and increased the chances of kill or capture by the security forces.⁹³ One of the primary demands of this approach was the need for insurgent quartermasters, who played a critical role in the acquisition, storage, transport, and caching of IEDs.⁹⁴ IED components were commonly held in stash houses located in rural areas of the Republic of Ireland, where they were less likely to be discovered by the security forces, but still close enough to transport to the north once an operation was set in motion.

⁹⁰ David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p.69.

⁹¹ For more on the role of the media in conflict, see Christopher Paul and James J. Kim, *Reporters on the Battlefield: The Embedded Press System in Historical Context*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2004.

⁹² Christopher Paul, *Strategic Communication: Origins, Concepts, and Current Debates*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011, p.79.

⁹³ David Kilcullen, “Counterinsurgency *Redux*,” *Survival*, Volume 48, Number 4, Winter 2006-2007, p.8.

⁹⁴ Martin Dillon, *The Dirty War*, London: Routledge, 1999.

2.2 OPERATIONAL TOOLS

If leadership provides the brains of an insurgency, then its operations tools, or resources, serve as the lifeblood. Put simply, operational tools are used to defend territory, plan and execute attacks, deter adversaries, and destroy enemies. Without weapons, money, intelligence, training, and sanctuary, insurgents are only capable of waging a limited struggle. Because insurgents are most often, if not always, militarily inferior to the COIN force or host-nation government (this is what makes the conflict *asymmetric*), operational tools are critical to help sustain the insurgency and afford the insurgents with a slightly more level playing field. For the PIRA, this was certainly the case as it fought Protestant paramilitary groups, Northern Ireland security forces, and the British Army.

Operational tools are indispensable to insurgents. At the same time, not all resources are created equal. Some are critical, others are valuable but not essential, and still others are only of minor import. Accordingly, this section of the chapter focuses on:

- How operational tools factor into an insurgency
- How the resource needs of the insurgents changed over the course of the conflict
- To what extent the COIN force was able to deny insurgent resource needs

The PIRA's most valuable operational tools were sanctuary, training, and funding. To counter these capabilities, the COIN forces relied upon subversion, intelligence, and infiltration. Figure 12 displays both the driving forces and restraining forces at work during the conflict. These sub-variables are then measured in the final analysis against the backdrop of the group's ultimate decision to negotiate with the British government to end the conflict.

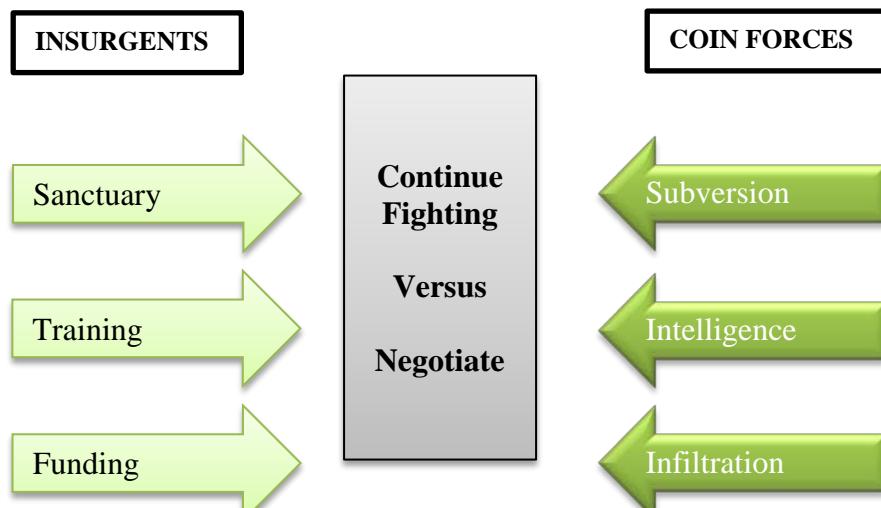


Figure 4: PIRA Force Field

2.2.1 Sanctuary/Safe Haven

In an insurgency, establishing a sanctuary is integral to success. For the majority of its terror campaign, the PIRA took advantage of safe havens around Northern Ireland, as well as sanctuaries in both the Republic of Ireland and the United States, although each country was used for different purposes at different times. The US was mostly a place for insurgents to raise funds, evade capture, and coalesce political support; the Republic of Ireland served as a “rear base” from which insurgents could hold important meetings, plan attacks, conduct weapons training, and amass their arsenal. During the 1980s, many PIRA fighters spent time in Libyan training camps at the invitation of Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Qaddafi.

2.2.1.1 Why was sanctuary/safe haven such a valuable resource?

Rest, Recuperation, and Planning

From safe houses located south of the border, PIRA insurgents could hide out after conducting an attack in the North. Safe houses provided insurgents with a place to lay low and a change of clothes to discard any evidence from an attack, including blood and gunpowder residue. The most important function of safe havens south of the border, however, was the ability of the PIRA's most senior members to gather in one location without being detected or arrested by the authorities. Clandestine movements need to avoid detection, and depending on group cohesion and organizational structure, the loss of an insurgent group's top leadership can deliver a potentially fatal blow to the organization. The General Army Convention (GAC), a meeting of the PIRA's senior leadership, was held at various locations throughout the ROI. This allowed the group to debate high-level decisions regarding the organization, including its military strategy, the role of politics, leadership composition, and the future direction of the organization.

Weapons Storage

The PIRA maintained numerous weapons caches in both Northern Ireland and the ROI. As part of the group's "long war doctrine," which committed members to a lifetime of conflict, the insurgents stockpiled weapons, hoarded explosives, and relentlessly searched for ways to acquire the most modern and lethal technology. Acquiring and amassing weapons remained a top priority of the PIRA until the very end. Invariably throughout the conflict, British COIN forces and ROI police (*Gardaí*) intercepted large weapons shipments and successfully executed several high profile arms recovery operations, yielding substantial amounts of weaponry. Despite setbacks, however, the PIRA always remained active. The insurgents maintained at least five

bomb making factories in the Republic at all times. Most of these facilities were extremely secure and in some cases were constructed as fortified bunkers.⁹⁵ It was also not uncommon for the PIRA to use the home of widows and single mothers to hide their weapons. This particular demographic drew less attention from the police and was able to earn some extra money by providing the PIRA with a critical service, while also contributing to the insurgents' cause.

Training

A shared culture and history, geographical proximity, and a lingering resentment of the British made the ROI the most logical safe haven for PIRA members. It was in the ROI that insurgent training camps were set up and new recruits were instructed in small arms handling, target practice, demolition techniques, and general field craft.⁹⁶ The long border with the ROI was hard to defend and in some cases PIRA members owned property that straddled both sides of the border. The ROI was so instrumental to the operational ability of the group that its Northern Command included not just the six counties of Northern Ireland, but also the five border counties of Louth, Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal, and Leitrim.⁹⁷ Other than mere geography, the Republic was a model sanctuary because it had a relatively sympathetic population, limited internal security force activities, and vast rural areas where the insurgents could disguise their activities from the authorities—all ideal characteristics for an insurgent safe haven.⁹⁸ PIRA members

⁹⁵ John Horgan and Max Taylor, "Playing the 'Green Card' -Financing the Provisional IRA: Part 1," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Volume 11, Number 2, Summer 1999, p.5

⁹⁶ Brian Jackson, "Training for Urban Resistance: The Case of the Provisional Irish Republican Army," p.123, in James JF Forest, *The Making of a Terrorist, Volume II: Training*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2005.

⁹⁷ Horgan and Taylor, "Command and Functional Structure," p.7.

⁹⁸ Training camps were located throughout the entire ROI even as far south as Cork and took the form of farms, beaches, and wooded areas. Jackson, "Training for Urban Resistance," p.128.

occasionally traveled abroad for training and forged working relationships with terrorist groups in South America, Europe, and the Middle East.

Avoid Arrest/Detection

Both the United States and the Republic of Ireland were popular destinations for insurgents, but the US in particular, served as a safe haven for Republican terrorists, especially those on the run. According to Daniel Byman, “The diaspora [also] acted as a safe haven for IRA fugitives. The Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAI) helped IRA operatives find new identities and jobs in the United States, enabling them to escape justice in Northern Ireland.”⁹⁹ Some PIRA insurgents fled to America and assumed a new life, where they blended in with the other Irish immigrants in Queens, Manhattan, and the Bronx, and worked as bartenders or in the construction industry. Insurgents would spend anywhere from days to years hiding outside of Northern Ireland, sneaking back into the country to execute attacks or deliver weapons before disappearing once again.

Recruit, Fundraise, Lobby for Political Support

Besides serving as a physical safe haven for fugitives, the US was also a place where PIRA sympathizers and affiliates were given free rein to fundraise. “The IRA’s ability to enjoy a haven in the United States and to raise money was bolstered by US laws governing the rights of those engaged in political activity, even if such activity involved violence,” notes Byman.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp.246-258.

¹⁰⁰ Daniel Byman, “Passive Sponsors of Terrorism,” *Survival*, Volume 47, Number 4, Winter 2005, p.134.

NORAIID was founded in New York in 1970 and over the course of the conflict managed to raise between \$3 and \$5 million for “the cause,” by soliciting donations from the Irish diaspora and Irish-American activists in major cities throughout the country, including New York, Chicago, Boston, and Albany.¹⁰¹ The fighters were home grown but the money was foreign. American political support for ending the conflict gained traction during the presidency of Bill Clinton, who, by many accounts, served as an honest broker during negotiations even as others accused him of being “pro-IRA.”

2.2.1.2 How did it change over time?

Although Irish militants had enjoyed sanctuary in the United States since the time of America’s civil war, the situation began to change in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher pressured US President Ronald Reagan to clamp down on PIRA fundraising and political activity throughout the US¹⁰² Prior to Thatcher’s persistence, the PIRA enjoyed unfettered access to politicians, influential business leaders, and other powerbrokers who sympathized with its cause. The other major change over the conflict’s duration was the priorities and competence of the Irish security forces. In the early 1970s, following British policies such as internment, the Irish police were not likely to interfere with the insurgents. “As sympathy for their cause in the Republic exploded, IRA fugitives could now find sanctuary across the Border, safe in the knowledge that the Gardaí would not throw them behind bars,” recalls Moloney.¹⁰³ But over time, the PIRA’s brutality earned its members no favor among the

¹⁰¹ In many of these cities, NORAIID maintained what it called “Century Clubs,” which were groups of ten individuals who would be called on to donate \$100 at a moment’s notice. Each “Century Club” produced \$1,000.

¹⁰² Moloney, *A Secret History of the IRA*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002, p.16.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p.101.

Gardaí, whose colleagues (Catholics, just like PIRA insurgents) had been injured or killed while attempting to apprehend insurgents operating or hiding in the ROI. After years of dealing with PIRA militants using the country as a safe haven, the *Gardaí* eventually grew to become a quite effective security force. The Irish police even collaborated with British authorities to disrupt ongoing PIRA plots, planned operations and future activities.

By the late 1980s, the once militant fervor of many Catholics—in Northern Ireland, the Republic, and those in the Irish diaspora—had given way to a feeling of ‘war weariness.’ Just as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was despised by the majority of Northern Ireland’s Protestants, the PIRA too, had morphed into a more despicable entity to many Irish Catholics. John Hume and the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) was the party most Catholics preferred. Many in the Catholic community feared the Provos rather than respected them. Punishment beatings and ‘knee-cappings’ doled out by PIRA members wore thin on the community and had the effect of making the community feel less safe.

2.2.2 Training/Tacit Knowledge Transfer

Considered one of the most lethal insurgent groups of the modern era, it is essential to examine the training, techniques, and procedures that proved so critical to the success of the Provisional IRA. What made the PIRA such an effective fighting force was its reliance on and belief in the value of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is unarticulated, personally-held knowledge or skills that are acquired through painstaking trial and error processes (learning by doing or by

example).¹⁰⁴ The PIRA believed that if it ever had a chance to defeat the British militarily, and many members within the group's ranks truly thought this a possibility, its fighters would have to hold themselves to the same rigorous training standards endured by elite COIN force units like the British Special Air Service, or SAS. By placing an emphasis on training, the leadership was able to identify talented and highly capable recruits who took pride in honing their craft, whether it was bomb making, sniping, or reconnaissance.

2.2.2.1 Why was tacit knowledge transfer such a valuable resource?

Training and the transfer of technical know-how was important to the PIRA for five reasons in particular: specialization, lethality, professionalism/image, networking, and longevity. Over time, however, two main factors affected the significance that tacit knowledge transfer had on the conflict. First, British COIN forces developed a network of informants and sophisticated surveillance, which helped them neutralize the PIRA's ability to remain ahead of the curve in weapons technology. Second, and partly as a response to the success of the COIN force, the PIRA began to shift resources from its militant wing to its emerging political counterpart, Sinn Féin.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Definition taken from Sonia Ben Ouagrham-Gormley and Dennis M. Gormley, "Trafficking WMD Materials in Central Asia and the Caucasus: I & W Implications," presentation delivered to the Naval Postgraduate School, conference on "Terrorism, Transnational Networks, and WMD Proliferation: Indications and Warning in an Era of Globalization," July 25-27, 2006, available online at <http://www.nps.edu/ccf/conferences/recent/Presentations/Gormley%20and%20Oughram.pdf>, site accessed January 18, 2012. Also see Dennis M. Gormley, *Missile Contagion: Cruise Missile Proliferation and the Threat to International Security*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008, pp.10-11.

¹⁰⁵ While this was one factor it was one among several, discussed in more detail in the chapter's conclusion.

Specialization

As the organization evolved and matured, the insurgents became more specialized. Select insurgents were schooled in bomb making while others were groomed as snipers, logisticians, or intelligence experts.¹⁰⁶ To allow for diversification without diluting an acquired specialization, “units used rotation or ‘apprenticeship’ processes to spread specific types of knowledge or expertise.”¹⁰⁷ Specialization afforded the insurgents a degree of tactical and operational flexibility. Attacks were tailored to the abilities of different units in different areas of operation. Units operating in more rural areas like South Armagh typically experienced a slower learning curve and were given the opportunity to immerse themselves into a specialization slowly and with the deliberate oversight of battle- tested mentors. In contrast, units that operated in Belfast and other urban areas known for a high operations tempo (optempo) were thrown “in at the deep end quickly,” which led to more mistakes and a greater chance that something could go awry with an operation.¹⁰⁸

While the PIRA retained more than 30 varieties of weapons in its vast arsenal, the use of explosives, grenade launchers, and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) required the most sophisticated degree of training and tacit knowledge transfer in order to be effective. As such, it makes sense that these were also the weapons that experienced the most innovation over the course of the insurgency, as the group continuously sought to improve its ability to deploy them against the COIN forces. “For these innovation efforts, [the] PIRA drew on expertise within the

¹⁰⁶ Toby Harnden, *Bandit Country: The IRA & South Armagh*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2000, p.53. For a thorough analysis of the PIRA’s intelligence capabilities, see Gaetano Joe Ilardi, “IRA Operational Intelligence: The Heartbeat of the War,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.21, No.2, June 2010, pp.331-358.

¹⁰⁷ Jackson, “Training for Urban Resistance,” p.127.

¹⁰⁸ Brian Jackson et al, *Aptitude for Destruction, Volume 2: Case Studies of Organizational Learning in Five Terrorist Groups*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2005, p.124.

commercial sector and on experts from abroad and within the military” to increase members’ proficiency in deploying these weapons, which led directly to the ability to kill larger numbers of the security forces and Protestant paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland.¹⁰⁹

Lethality

Killing British soldiers stationed in Northern Ireland was an overtly stated objective of the insurgents. The group believed that if it could kill enough soldiers, mounting body bags would compel the British population to pressure its government to withdraw from Northern Ireland quickly or negotiate an end to the conflict on terms favorable to the PIRA.¹¹⁰ Consequently, the number of COIN force soldiers killed became a measure of success for the insurgents. Unlike ordinary terrorists, who target non-combatants and other non-military elements of the civilian population, insurgents desire to take the fight directly to the government or its military.

Tellingly, definitions of what constituted “non-military elements of the civilian population” were an issue of much debate. To clarify the matter, in 1985 the PIRA Army Council released an official statement that decreed ‘legitimate targets’ included “anyone who provided services or materials to the security forces, from the supplier of fresh vegetables to the Royal Ulster Constabulary Headquarters in Belfast to the rural garage owner who sold petrol to off-duty policemen.”¹¹¹ In effect, a wide net was cast.

The emphasis on lethality made training and technical expertise paramount to the PIRA’s strategy. Within the group, innovation was prized. Insurgents designed new explosive devices

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.101.

¹¹⁰ M.L.R. Smith, *Fighting for Ireland? The Military Strategy of the Irish Republican Movement*, Santa Barbara: Routledge, 1997, p.97.

¹¹¹ Kevin Toolis, *Rebel Hearts: Journeys Within the IRA’s Soul*, New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 1995, p.53.

using a clever array of, at first, remote manual detonators and later, automatic detonators to make their bombs more precise and targeted.¹¹² The group also developed its own take on already-existing weapons, including the improvised projected grenade (IPG) and the projected recoilless improvised grenade (PRIG).¹¹³ By developing precision-guided weapons, the PIRA sought to maximize COIN force casualties while reducing harm to civilians, thus helping the group to enjoy what it deemed as acceptable levels of popular support in Northern Ireland.

Professionalism & Image

In spite of the death toll, the minimization of civilian casualties remained a deliberate objective of the PIRA. Often times, before it detonated a bomb in a major urban area, the group would call ahead to alert authorities so that civilians could be evacuated. This way, the bomb still had the desired effect of causing economic damage, but by warning officials of the impending strike, the PIRA attempted to frame the conflict as a reaction to the British occupation, and not a war directed against the British people themselves. This all tied in to the group's aim of projecting an air of professionalism and an image of a potent military force.¹¹⁴

Certain cells within the explosive unit were tasked with institutionalizing the production of the bombs' electronic components.¹¹⁵ This effort was a defensive countermeasure, aimed at ensuring that PIRA bombs would not be prematurely detonated by the security forces or explode

¹¹² Though this is not an exhaustive list, some IRA explosive device innovations included: radar detectors, police radar guns, photographic unites triggered by flashes of light, infrared transmitters from garage door openers, projectile detonators, Memopark timers, and electromagnetic traps. See Brian Jackson, *Aptitude for Destruction Vol.2*, pp.100-104.

¹¹³ Jackson, *Aptitude for Destruction Vol.2*, p.107.

¹¹⁴ Andrew Silke, "Beyond Horror: Terrorist Atrocity and the Search for Understanding- The Case of the Shankhill Bombing," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 26, Issue 1, January/February 2003, pp.37-60.

¹¹⁵ Jackson, *Aptitude for Destruction Vol.2*, p.103.

inadvertently, killing PIRA members or innocent bystanders. As covered in the next section, the deeper the COIN forces were able to penetrate the PIRA the more adept they became at thwarting insurgent bomb attacks. This had a negative impact on the group's morale and signaled to others that perhaps the Provos were becoming sloppy, or simply no longer had the same desire to fight as they once did. To avoid complacency, the PIRA trained not only its own members, but also traveled abroad to develop a network with other terrorist and insurgent groups that would allow it to hone its skills and learn new techniques and guerilla tactics.

Networking

The PIRA schooled its own recruits in various terrorist tactics but also shared its expertise abroad with other insurgent groups. While both the ROI and the US contributed to the conflict's transnational dimension (links with these two countries dated back centuries), the PIRA developed connections in other countries as well, establishing a robust presence in the Middle East and North Africa, with operatives stationed in Algeria, Libya, and Lebanon. The Provos exchanged training tips and tactics with myriad terrorist groups including FARC, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Fatah.¹¹⁶ In July 1973, PIRA insurgents attended a meeting in Libya with members from the German Baader-Mainhof gang, the Japanese United Revolutionary Army, the Liberation Front of Iran, the Turkish People's Liberation Army, and the Uruguayan Tupamaros.¹¹⁷

In one of the most significant cases of tacit knowledge transfer between insurgent groups, three PIRA members were detained in Colombia in August 2001 and charged with

¹¹⁶ Brian Jackson, "Training for Urban Resistance," p.131.

¹¹⁷ Don Mansfield, "The Irish Republican Army and Northern Ireland," in Bard E. O'Neill, William R. Heaton, and Donald J. Alberts, eds., *Insurgency in the Modern World*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1980, p.73.

aiding FARC. The PIRA, a widely recognized and highly regarded technological innovator, trained FARC rebels in the areas of homemade explosives, mortars, and other lethal urban terrorist tactics.¹¹⁸ In return, PIRA insurgents used FARC's autonomy in certain areas of Colombia's jungles to test fire new weapons and explosives. Founding members of the Provisional IRA had learned from the Greek Cypriot terror group EOKA and the early years of the organization saw a fairly regular exchange of ideas, technology, and training with the Spanish group Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA).¹¹⁹ Now the PIRA serves as master to other apprentices. Networking was a deliberate strategy that facilitated the collection and codification of knowledge and added to the complexity of countering an increasingly agile network.

Longevity

Specialization, increased proficiency and lethality, a professional fighting force, and the ability to network all contributed to the IRA's longevity and formed the foundation of its long war doctrine. From the start, the PIRA acknowledged the value of training recruits and taught its members new skills to support and improve the group's operational capability.¹²⁰ A PIRA 'boot camp' offered not only the benefits of military training, but also philosophical or ideological guidance as well. To some PIRA experts, the ideological indoctrination superseded the tactical training. "An underground army inevitably has a training program, at least in theory... [but] they are far more concerned with maintaining the creed than in instilling the techniques of war,"

¹¹⁸ Kim Cragin et al., *Sharing the Dragon's Teeth: Terrorist Groups and the Exchange of New Technologies*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2007, pp.83-87. The PIRA also enjoyed the safe haven of Colombia's jungles in the south and east of the country in order to test fire new weapons.

¹¹⁹ Jackson, *Aptitude for Destruction Vol.2*, 120.

¹²⁰ Jackson, "Training for Urban Resistance," p.120.

observes J. Bowyer Bell, a prominent PIRA historian.¹²¹ To be sure, Bell's quote indicates a substantial socialization aspect to PIRA training, but for pragmatic reasons, military training increased in emphasis over political training during the 1970s, the most violent period of the insurgency.¹²²

2.2.2.2 How did it change over time?

Two factors had a major impact on the PIRA's ability to effectively transfer tacit knowledge within the organization and between its members. The first was infiltration of the group by British intelligence agents who relied on subversion to hamper PIRA operations. Second, and partly in response to the success of COIN force intelligence efforts, the PIRA began to shift its resources from the militant wing to the group's political doppelgänger, Sinn Féin.

By the mid-1970s, PIRA explosive experts had become notorious for their skill and ability to kill and injure British soldiers. In response, the British turned to Brigadier General Frank Kitson, infamous in his own right for effectively quelling the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya over a decade earlier. To neutralize the PIRA's bomb makers, Kitson implemented a strategy that relied on subversion, sabotage, and subterfuge. This strategy would combine human intelligence (HUMINT) with electronic intelligence (ELINT), signals intelligence (SIGINT), and communications intelligence (COMINT).

Among the techniques employed by the COIN forces were: airborne sensors with live-feed television, sophisticated photograph devices, infrared detection systems, listening devices, phone taps, hidden cameras, motion detectors, and technologies that intercepted communications

¹²¹ J. Bowyer Bell, *The Dynamics of the Armed Struggle*, Santa Barbara: Routledge, 1998, p.137.

¹²² Jackson, "Training for Urban Resistance," p.122.

traffic.¹²³ And while the tools used to collect intelligence were sophisticated, the focus remained on “low-grade” or “low-level” intelligence, which allowed intelligence analysts to track the types of attacks, types of weapons, timing, and frequency of operations.¹²⁴

On the HUMINT side, COIN force agencies including the Force Research Unit (FRU), MI5, British army intelligence, and a paramilitary police unit known as Special Branch, all recruited PIRA members as agents, or “touts.”¹²⁵ On many occasions, insurgents-turned-informers would purposefully sabotage an attack by interfering with one of the bomb components. Another technique, known as “jarking,” involved placing tracking devices in weapons and explosives discovered in PIRA arms caches, which made it possible to follow the trail of the arms through the group’s logistical system, sometimes with an audio capability included.¹²⁶ Before long, the COIN forces were intimately aware of the technological innovations being made in PIRA weaponry and even went so far as to control insurgent techniques through collaboration.¹²⁷

The other major change in the importance of tacit knowledge transfer was a slower evolution over the course of the insurgency. The more successful the British were at neutralizing the insurgents’ ability to wage war, the more the group began to shift resources from acquiring

¹²³ Brian Jackson, “Counterinsurgency Intelligence in a ‘Long War’: The British Experience in Northern Ireland,” *Military Review*, January/February 2007, p.80.

¹²⁴ Keith Maguire, “The Intelligence War in Northern Ireland,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Volume 4, Number 2, 1990, p.152.

¹²⁵ For more on this technique, see Michael Kirk-Smith and James Dingley, “Countering Terrorism in Northern Ireland: The Role of Intelligence,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.20, Nos.3-4, 2009, pp.551-573.

¹²⁶ Mark Urban, *Big Boy’s Rules: Covert Operations in Northern Ireland 1976-87*, London: Faber and Faber, 1992. See especially, Urban’s chapter titled “Jarking and the Technology of Terror,” pp.112-129.

¹²⁷ Matthew Teague, “Double Blind: The Untold Story of How British Intelligence Infiltrated and Undermined the IRA,” *Atlantic Monthly*, April 2006.

weapons to canvassing for votes. The inverse relationship between success on the battlefield and in the voting booth played right into the hands of the British, although a side effect of Sinn Fein's electoral success was the marginalization of Ulster's Protestants constituency, particularly the Loyalists. This paradigm shift is emblematic of the group's transition from war to peace and demonstrates why any comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy must include a political element.

2.2.3 Funding/Financing

The Provisional Irish Republican Army, like other insurgent groups, relied on a combination of internal and external funding mechanisms to meet the financial requirements needed to wage a protracted insurgency against the British and various Protestant paramilitary groups. As John Horgan and Max Taylor observe, while finance doesn't necessarily inhibit an insurgent group from waging war against the state, it does limit "the extent and sophistication of a terrorist organization's activities."¹²⁸ For a group like the PIRA, with a constantly evolving political wing in Sinn Fein, financing was even more important than for pure militant groups. "Finance is one of the most important long-term, fundamental, limiting factors for the development of a terrorist group and its political wing," notes Horgan.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Horgan and Taylor, "Playing Green Card Part I," p.2.

¹²⁹ Interview with John Horgan, December 10, 2011.

2.2.3.1 Why was financing such a valuable resource?

For the PIRA, funding was such a critical resource because of the group's wide range of activities and responsibilities. Furthermore, declaring war against such a formidable enemy as the British military would require significant resources if the PIRA was to have even a remote chance of success. This, in turn, necessitated a vast array of weaponry and the maintenance of complex organizational infrastructure, both of which are expensive. In general, PIRA operating costs can be divided into five main areas: paying the salaries of its members; acquiring weapons and munitions; planning and preparation for operations; sustaining the families of PIRA prisoners and members killed in action; supporting the growth and maturation of its political wing, Sinn Féin.

Pay salaries of volunteers

Upon being sworn into the group, or becoming an 'official Provo,' newly-minted PIRA members pledged an oath to uphold the values of the *Oglaigh na hEireann* and were anointed as 'Volunteers of the Provisional Irish Republican Army.'¹³⁰ And just as in a volunteer army, compared with a conscripted military, volunteers chose to enter service, but did not work for free and were given regular pay. Sometimes referred to as the human resources dimension of insurgency, fighters still need to be remunerated for their services. This compensation took the form of cash payments, so insurgents could take care of the needs of their families and maintain a reserve of money for ordinary activities like food and shelter, when it was not provided directly by the group. Some members held down regular jobs in addition to their PIRA activity while others were considered too valuable and central to the organization to focus their energy

¹³⁰ *Oglaigh na hEireann* is an Irish-language title for the Irish Volunteers of 1913.

anywhere other than on the organization itself. These individuals were considered ‘full-time staff,’ and were likely known to the security services. More often than not, this meant they needed to take care to conceal their activities and movements and lead an extremely clandestine existence.¹³¹

Although the figures are still a matter of debate, reports indicate that up until 1994, Active Service Unit (ASU) members received £30-£40 per week, depending on their actual role in the organization as well as the geographical location from which they operated (think of it in terms of destination-based per diem). Taking into account the PIRA’s 400-500 estimated members, weekly payouts totaled £12,000 or more.¹³² Conventional wisdom holds that when individuals receive a regular salary, they are less likely to supplement their incomes by engaging in illegal criminal activities, which bring unwanted attention on the group and expose members to arrest, prosecution, and the possibility of being “flipped,” or turned into an informer, or “tout,” against the group.¹³³

Acquiring Weapons and Munitions

Obtaining the material resources for guerilla war is expensive, especially when, like the PIRA, the group has a desire to acquire high-tech weaponry including SAMs and SAM launchers, Russian-made rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) launchers, machine guns, assault and sniper

¹³¹ Interview with John Horgan, December 10, 2011.

¹³² Horgan and Taylor, “Playing the Green Card-Part I,” p.7.

¹³³ This was a common tactic of the security services in Northern Ireland. Individuals would be arrested and promised steady payments and freedom from prosecution for agreeing to become a ‘tout,’ or informer of PIRA activities and operations. Martin McGartland, *Fifty Dead Men Walking: The Heroic True Story of a British Secret Agent Inside the IRA*, London: John Blake, 2009. In 2008, this book was also made into a film starring Ben Kingsley.

rifles, and heavy weaponry like the Barrett Light-50 heavy machine gun.¹³⁴ Due to the largesse of weaponry bestowed upon the group by Qaddafi, which is covered in detail later in this chapter, in the 1980s the PIRA had less of a need to devote a substantial portion of its operating budget to acquiring weaponry. Furthermore, the explosives used by the group were almost exclusively being made by the PIRA themselves.¹³⁵ PIRA bomb makers, or engineers as they were called within the group, were universally acknowledged to be among the most skilled in the world at their craft. That most of the ingredients needed to construct home-made mortar equipment and home-made bombs could be obtained at a relatively low cost merely allowed the group to spend more of its budget on cutting- edge electronics, like radio-controlled detonation devices, to pair with its bombs.¹³⁶ Insurgents too, like to accessorize!

Planning and Preparation for Operations

Long an under- researched aspect of insurgent organizations, the amount of money needed to successfully execute lethal operations against COIN forces “extends far beyond the purchase of a gun and bullets which culminate in an attack.”¹³⁷ The planning and preparation for operations included, but were not limited to: transport costs, the maintenance of weapons storage sites, the support of safe houses, vehicles used to transport arms, and the purchase of radio equipment. Transport costs included the price of petrol used in transporting the operatives to and from the scene of the attack or the purchase of train, bus, or airplane tickets for international operations.

¹³⁴ Horgan and Taylor, “Playing the Green Card-Part I,” p.4.

¹³⁵ Horgan and Taylor, “Playing the Green Card-Part I,” p.5

¹³⁶ Still, as the expertise of the ‘Engineers’ grew, the group relied on low-cost detonators that could be fashioned out of everyday devices like garage door openers.

¹³⁷ Horgan and Taylor, “Playing the Green Card-Part I,” p.6.

Payments were made to those individuals who allowed their homes or property to be used as weapons storage sites as well as to those whose homes were used to hide prisoners, many times for extended periods, in order to avoid detection by security forces following a PIRA operation. While these may seem like banal details, they are essential to executing a successful attack. Besides a reputation for brutality, PIRA insurgents were meticulous planners. Finally, the PIRA purchased between six and eight cars to transport arms from storage sites to border areas, as well as radio equipment for monitoring the movement of security forces prior to and following an attack.¹³⁸

Sustaining the Families of PIRA Prisoners and ‘Martyrs’

Another budgeting concern for the PIRA leadership was the sustenance of the families of insurgents who were killed or in prison, men (and their families) who were ‘on the run,’ and PIRA members who had served extended jail terms and as a result, were highly unlikely to secure employment in the licit sectors of the economy.¹³⁹ While the families of prisoners received financial support on a weekly or monthly basis, for various reasons it is unknown exactly how much money was reserved for these expenses. According to some estimates, over the course of its existence, NORAID raised between \$3 and \$5 million for the PIRA. While the official line in pubs and fundraising dinners was that the money would go toward sustaining the families of PIRA prisoners, many of those donating were well aware that a portion of the money, if not most of it, would be diverted to purchasing arms and explosives to continue the “armed struggle.” Nevertheless, longtime IRA supporter George Harrison and NORAID founder Martin

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid. p.7

Flannery, himself an IRA veteran who fought the ‘Black and Tans’ in the 1920s, always denied that the money went for guns. They admit that money was collected for guns, but this was kept separate from the money used to support the families of those most directly affected by ‘the Troubles.’¹⁴⁰ Official public statements and facts on the ground rarely converged.

Provide for the Growth and Maturation of Provisional Sinn Fein

As Sinn Fein became more prominent—both within Ulster politics and in relation to the PIRA overall—the financial resources needed to cover the group’s ever evolving infrastructure inevitably grew too. In addition to the organization’s headquarters in West Belfast, Sinn Fein established offices throughout the Republic of Ireland, held many public meetings and gatherings in hotels and pubs, and incurred substantial costs to remain competitive in local elections.¹⁴¹ To subsidize its activities, the PIRA expanded its fundraising portfolio to include armed robbery, kidnapping, and other forms of organized crime. James Adams concludes that “the organization has branched out from simple terrorism into organized crime to provide the estimated \$7 million per year they need to pay the gunmen and support a growing political base in Northern Ireland.”¹⁴² This should come as no surprise. After all, insurgency is armed politics.

2.2.3.2 How did it change over time?

Beginning in the 1970s, when the group was still relatively obscure, external assistance was minimal, with the exception of a modest amount of money trickling in from sympathizers in the

¹⁴⁰ Peter Taylor, *Provos: The IRA & Sinn Fein*, London: Bloomsbury, 1997, pp.84-85.

¹⁴¹ Horgan and Taylor, “Playing the Green Card-Part I,” p.7.

¹⁴² James Adams, *The Financing of Terror: How the Groups that Are Terrorizing the World Get the Money to Do It*, New York: Simon and Shuster, 1986, p.131.

United States. But, in a pattern that was to repeat itself throughout the duration of the conflict, watershed events would lead both individuals and organizations to donate substantial amounts of money that would swell PIRA coffers and provide the group with the means necessary to survive over three decades of war against the British security forces.

The first such incident took place in January 1972 when British paratroopers killed 13 protesters and injured an additional 17 following a civil rights march in Derry.¹⁴³ Since the primary responsibility of NORaid was to raise funds for the Provisionals, it became the main vehicle through which American donations flowed.¹⁴⁴ NORaid raised the lion's share of funds following acts of high profile British violence like Bloody Sunday, an incident that Committee's head man Michael Flannery dubbed the group's "first big publicity break."¹⁴⁵ Besides being a major recruiting boon for the PIRA, the donations offered to NORaid following Bloody Sunday foreshadowed the strength of the financial link with the Irish-American diaspora.

The next major windfall for the PIRA's finances came later that year in August 1972 when contact was formalized between the Provos and the Libyan regime of Qaddafi, who was an ardent opponent of the British.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, the PIRA secured approximately \$3.5 million from Qaddafi which could be used to keep the organization afloat in its nascent stages. This relationship was temporarily severed in the mid- 1970s due to disagreements between senior PIRA leaders and high-ranking members of Libyan intelligence, but was later reestablished following the death of ten Republican prisoners on hunger strike in 1981.

¹⁴³ Moloney, *A Secret History*, pp.110-112.

¹⁴⁴ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.117.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Richard English.

¹⁴⁶ In August 1972, two members of the PIRA's ruling body, Joe Cahill and Denis McNerney, met with members of Libyan intelligence in Warsaw, Poland. Moloney *A Secret History*, p.9.

Between contributions from abroad and the PIRA's internal activities, revenue for the group in the mid- 1980s is thought to have totaled somewhere around £7 million per year.¹⁴⁷

Indeed, much has been made about the external aspect of the PIRA's finances, but there also exists a significant, sophisticated internal operation used to generate funds through both licit and illicit activities.

The scale and scope of the PIRA's internal funding capabilities is complex. To generate the income necessary to operate the organization on a day-to-day basis, the group engaged in a wide array of illegal activities, including kidnapping for ransom, armed robbery, extortion, petrol smuggling, and "riding shotgun."¹⁴⁸ In what has been dubbed by Gerry Adams as his "Capone discovery," the PIRA leader learned that the organization could raise significant amounts of money from coercing shopkeepers and business owners into paying protection money. Less lucrative, but still valuable activities included income tax fraud, livestock smuggling (pigs, cattle, and bovine antibiotics), film piracy (including pornography), and automobile theft. The group also relied on legitimately owned businesses and has counted pubs, private security firms, taxi cab services, construction firms, and restaurants among its licit activities through which to both earn and launder money.

In sum, it takes a complex financial infrastructure to sustain a sophisticated insurgent

¹⁴⁷ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.344. Coogan puts the group's annual income in the early 1980s at over 1.5 million pounds. Coogan, *The IRA*, p.430. Nevertheless, it should be noted that many scholars, including Horgan and Taylor, stress that most of the estimates on the PIRA's income are mere 'guesstimates.' Horgan and Taylor, "Playing the Green Card," Part 2, p.46. By definition, the nature of a clandestine organization makes an accurate assessment extremely difficult.

¹⁴⁸ "Riding shotgun" is a term used for providing an armed escort on international drug shipments. See Horgan and Taylor, "Playing the Green Card, Part 1." The extent to which the PIRA itself is involved in selling drugs is a great matter of debate. After a thorough analysis, the authors conclude that "there remains considerable evidence to suggest that it is unlikely the PIRA is involved in direct drug trading." Horgan and Taylor see the hand of Sinn Fein in the group's decision to exclude this activity as a source of revenue.

group. Northern Ireland is an anomaly in that it is the only insurgency of the 89 post-WWII insurgencies to occur in a country with a high socio-economic status.¹⁴⁹ Commenting on the fundraising operations of the PIRA, Anderson emphasizes, “the Provisionals no longer have to live the hand-to-mouth existence of most guerilla groups; through prudent financial planning and entrepreneurial acumen, they have achieved long-term fiscal security, a solid base of investments to draw on.”¹⁵⁰ Certainly, this is one of the reasons for the insurgency’s longevity. But what role, if any, did financing play in the group’s decision to negotiate? This is explored at great length in the discussion of the shift from an emphasis on the PIRA and a move toward Sinn Fein.

2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

The leadership of the Provisional IRA was responsible for taking the group’s vast resources, as described above, and translating them into effective action. This had to be accomplished while maintaining group cohesion, a difficult task considering COIN force infiltration of the PIRA. The organization sought to achieve this through five main components—command and control (to include organizational structure), group composition, ideology, popular support, and public relations/propaganda. Each of these elements played a crucial role in determining the insurgency’s trajectory, as each individual component affected the organization’s strategic

¹⁴⁹ Connable and Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, p.165.

¹⁵⁰ Anderson cited estimates of the value of these investments somewhere in the range of \$60 million, which he concludes is “an endowment fund for the waging of future war.” S. Anderson, “Making a Killing,” *Harper’s Magazine*, 288, 1 Feb 1994. For more information on the implications for understanding PIRA fundraising, see J. Adams, ‘The Financing of Terror,’ in P. Wilkinson and A.M. Stewart (eds.), *Contemporary Research on Terrorism*, Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987, pp.393-405; also, Keith Maguire, ‘Fraud, Extortion, and Racketeering: The Black Economy in Northern Ireland,’ *Crime, Law, and Social Change*, 20, 1993, pp.273-292.

decision-making. Moreover, during the course of the thirty- year conflict, each element changed considerably, altering the PIRA's path along the way from violence to power sharing.

2.3.1 Command and Control

The Provisional Irish Republican Army was a complex organization, as reflected by the structure of the group and its decision-making apparatus, which was divided by both function and area of responsibility.¹⁵¹ As dictated by the 'Constitution of *Oglaigh na hEireann*,' the General Army Convention (GAC) is the 'Supreme Army Authority' of the PIRA. The GAC is a fluid body or meeting of delegates from various arms of the organization and numbers between 100 and 200 members.¹⁵² Comprised of a mix of active insurgents, prisoner representatives, Brigade staffs, General Headquarters members and the Army Council, the GAC was responsible for electing an 'Army Executive' of twelve members by ballot, who in turn elected the Army Council. GAC meetings were extremely rare and intelligence reports indicate that only three such meetings took place over the course of the group's existence.¹⁵³

The 12 member Army Executive met twice per year and its main responsibility was electing the Army Council. As such, the Army Executive was not a distinct ruling body in and of itself, but functioned in the capacity of a check-and-balance type role vis-à-vis the Army

¹⁵¹ Brian A. Jackson, "Organizational Decision-Making by Terrorist Groups," in in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin eds., *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2009, p.215.

¹⁵² John Horgan and Max Taylor, "The Provisional Irish Republican Army: Command and Functional Structure," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.9, No.3, Autumn 1997, p.4.

¹⁵³ The first meeting occurred in 1969 following the OIRA/PIRA split, the second in 1986 to discuss the group's move away from political abstentionism, and the third meeting ten years later in 1996 to broach the possibility of a 'rethinking' of policies at the end of a two year cease-fire. Jim Cusack, "Doves are Winning Power Battle inside the IRA," *Irish Times* (Dublin), 16 September 1996.

Council. The Army Council was a seven member body that met frequently and, according to Taylor and Horgan, was “the overall PIRA leadership responsible for the execution of all military policies in line with overall strategies.”¹⁵⁴ The Chief of Staff of the Army Council was the main authority and overall decision-maker of ‘strategy and tactics’ of the group’s “long war” strategy.

The General Headquarters (GHQ) Staff was subordinate to the Army Council and implemented the Army Council’s decisions. That structure was put in place during the group’s reorganization in the late 1970s.¹⁵⁵ While the Army Council formulated the decisions and was in charge of authorizing specific operations, the GHQ staff was responsible for “running the PIRA campaign of violence.”¹⁵⁶ Based in Dublin, the GHQ staff consisted of 50-60 members and was tasked with the overall maintenance and conduct of PIRA activities. The GHQ was divided up into 10 departments, each headed by a ‘Director’ or ‘Officer’ and staffed with 4-5 members. The departments were responsible for executing the operational decisions of the Army Council and providing various forms of support as military activities demanded. The 10 GHQ departments were: Quartermaster, Security, Operations, Foreign Operations, Finance, Training, Engineering, Intelligence, Education, and Publicity.¹⁵⁷

In addition to a clearly defined command structure, the PIRA also divided its operational structure according to geography, North and South. Northern Command included the six counties of Northern Ireland as well as the five border counties, as outlined in the section on

¹⁵⁴ Horgan and Taylor, “Command and Functional Structure,” p.5.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p.6.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ For an in-depth explanation of each department, see Horgan and Taylor, “Command and Functional Structure,” pp.9-18.

sanctuary. In decreasing authority, Northern Command was composed of Brigadiers (also known as Brigade Adjutants or Brigade Commanders), OCs, and ASUs, or active service units.¹⁵⁸ A typical ASU was trained for a specific task (e.g. bombing, intelligence, robberies, etc.) and consisted of 4 Volunteers and had one OC, with 3-4 ASUs in each Brigade.¹⁵⁹

Southern Command included all the counties of the ROI, minus the 5 border counties, which fell under the jurisdiction of Northern Command. Since the group's inception, Southern Command played more of a supporting role to Northern Command. Still, the importance of Southern Command as a base of logistic support should not be discounted, as the ROI always remained a safe haven for PIRA insurgents on the run as well as the group's primary base for the storage of weapons.

The structure described above was adopted in the late 1970s as part of planning to engage the British in a war of attrition. To the PIRA, replacing the brigade/battalion/company structure with a more cellular structure was a measure taken out of necessity, as the group sought to avoid infiltration by British security forces. This rearrangement had its roots in the jails and was credited for operational success, particularly in the area of the detonation of remote-controlled bombs.¹⁶⁰ The leadership of the group was unaffected by the reorganization. The chain of command was left intact. Regional commands dispersed weapons and explosives to the cells, as needed. More than ever before, secrecy was essential since cells now operated beyond their home base. Rural cells, particularly those operating in South Armagh and Derry, chafed at the restructuring of the organization and argued that the emphasis on maintaining secrecy, even

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.7.

¹⁵⁹ The Active Service Unit (ASU) is made up of PIRA insurgents who are directly responsible for executing military operations such as shootings or bombings.

¹⁶⁰ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.213.

among other Republicans and family members, “undermined Volunteers’ social standing and morale.”¹⁶¹

2.3.2 Group Composition

For the most part, the composition of an insurgent movement defines the group’s strategy, both political and military. Within every organization are hawks, doves, and pragmatists. The Provisional IRA split from the Original IRA in December 1969, according to Richard English, along “three interweaving strands: legitimacy, ideology, and militarism.”¹⁶² It was this final strand—militarism—that would come to define the Provisionals. At the time of the split, the Provos regarded their erstwhile comrades as weak and ineffectual. Even more egregious, the Official IRA had abandoned the military duty “traditionally cherished by the IRA.”¹⁶³ The PIRA would restore this vengeance and raise the armed element of the struggle to a level previously unseen.

2.3.2.1 Gerry Adams

Gerry Adams was born into a staunchly Irish republican household with roots stretching back to the earliest days of the movement, with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins each occupying significant positions in the IRA or one of its many predecessors, including the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Fenians, and the *Cumann na mBan*, the women’s branch of the

¹⁶¹ Peter R. Neumann, *Old Terrorism & New Terrorism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, pp.30-31.

¹⁶² English, *Armed Struggle*, p.107.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p.108.

IRA.¹⁶⁴ Adams joined the IRA in 1965 at the age of 16 and in 1966 and was sworn into D Company (D Coy) of the Belfast Brigade, one of the most aggressive units in the organization, which earned it the nickname “the Dogs,” shorthand for “the dogs of war.”¹⁶⁵ Much can be said about Adams and indeed many books have been written about “the Big Lad,” as he came to be known, and his role in some of the PIRA’s most violent incidents throughout the early 1970s.

More significantly, the focus of this section is to trace the evolution of the PIRA’s most influential members over the course of the insurgency, and no member had a more profound impact on the direction of the organization than Gerry Adams himself. He rose quickly through the ranks of the PIRA, becoming the organizational commander (OC) of the 2nd Battalion in Belfast sometime between February 1971 and March 1972. The following year he was appointed Adjutant for the entire Belfast Brigade, and by July 1973, at the time of his arrest, his status as OC of the Belfast Brigade identified him as a rising star within Irish republican circles.¹⁶⁶ During his time in these roles, the evidence suggests that Adams was firmly committed to the idea of using violence to further the PIRA’s objectives. Adams’ reign as OC of the Belfast Brigade was one of the most violent periods in the long history of the conflict. Between May 1971 and July 1973, the PIRA had killed 211 people.¹⁶⁷

Still, because of the lingering influence of Marxists like Cathal Goulding and his involvement with organizations like the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and the National Liberation Front, it would be a mistake to characterize Adams, even in his early

¹⁶⁴ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.38.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.46.

¹⁶⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.110.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

years, as a true ideologue. He clearly accepted that conflict was an inevitable reality of the PIRA's struggle, and used his organizational abilities and tactical skills toward violent ends. But the cerebral Adams had always been open to the idea of debate or discussion, including on hot button issues like abstentionism and electoral politics.¹⁶⁸

Writing under the pseudonym "Brownie," from Cage 11 in Long Kesh prison in the late 1970s, Adams, with assistance from Bobby Sands and Brendan Hughes, outlined what would become the organization's doctrine for the "long war." In a series of articles published in *An Phoblacht*, Adams put forth the argument that what was needed was an "active abstentionism," focused on building alternative structures of governance to provide critical services to the minority Catholic population in the north. The provision of services would be the responsibility of Sinn Fein. This is often the period in the PIRA's history that has been identified as the turning point of where the political wing would receive equal consideration with the military activities of the group. But the move was subtle and more importantly, it displayed Adams' skill for appeasing the two most important elements of the group—ideologues and radicals. "The really significant feature of the move was the way Adams sold it to his colleagues, largely on the basis that increasing political support would enable the IRA to intensify and sustain its war effort."¹⁶⁹ Primarily due to the influence of Adams, the "Armalite and the ballot box" strategy would now govern the PIRA's actions moving forward.¹⁷⁰

Referencing a more intimate involvement in politics under the guise of a military offensive was a strategy Adams would successfully employ once again in 1986. Couched in the

¹⁶⁸ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.69.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p.151.

¹⁷⁰ English, *Armed Struggle*, pp.224-225.

language of escalating the war against the British through an increase in operational capabilities, including an influx of weaponry from Libya (130 tons to be precise), Adams persuaded a General Army Convention that it was in the best interest of the PIRA/Sinn Fein to reevaluate its rigid orthodoxy concerning politics and vote in favor of the group's entry into Leinster House, the Irish parliament in Dublin.

Adams's performance at the 1986 convention was a huge coup for those in favor of trading bombs for ballots, but at the same time his constant reassurances to PIRA hardliners ensured that a major split between ideologues, radicals, and politicians was avoided. Furthermore, even though Adams engineered the Provos' move away from abstention, at this point in the struggle he still believed that violence was a necessary component of the conflict. In 1986, the same year as the convention, Adams was still of the mind that violence was "a necessary form of struggle" and that jettisoning the armed struggle from the PIRA's repertoire would be foolish, because "without it the issue of Ireland would not even be an issue."¹⁷¹

So what caused Adams to finally accept that violence no longer had a place in Northern Ireland and when did this change occur exactly? What spurred his conversion from radical to politician? Several reasons stand out. First, Adams was among the first members of the PIRA's leadership to recognize that the PIRA and British COIN forces had been stuck in a military stalemate for quite some time. He admitted as much in his book, *The Politics of Irish Freedom*, published in 1986. In the book, Adams lamented that "the IRA were able to block the imposition of a British solution but were unable to force the British to withdraw."¹⁷² Although this explanation lacks nuance, Adams simply realized that the PIRA's campaign of violence was

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p.343.

¹⁷² Gerry Adams, *Before the Dawn: An Autobiography*, New York: William Morrow and Co., 1996, p.58.

beginning to do more harm than good, especially as it related to the group's bargaining position in any future negotiations, which had to be part of the equation if the PIRA was unable to defeat the British militarily.

Second, Adams felt that his organization was now in a much more powerful bargaining position than ever before. The entire incentive structure had changed by the 1990s and the ever-opportunistic Adams believed that Sinn Fein/PIRA could gain considerable ground on issues high on the group's wish list, including: police reform, prisoner release, and most importantly, placing Irish republicans in the upper reaches of government.¹⁷³ Commenting on the position of the British in any future negotiations, he declared, "they can be moved as far as the political influence or power that can be harnessed for a democratic solution; they will move as far as that can push them."¹⁷⁴

Third, and finally, the relationship between nationalists and their loyalist counterparts had undergone major changes. The PIRA spent so much of its energy focusing on the British that at times, the loyalists seemed to be nothing more than a nuisance that could be dealt with at a later point. Throughout the negotiations, Loyalists clamored to display their virility by adopting slogans like, "No Surrender," "What we have we hold," and "Not an inch."¹⁷⁵ While the hardliners often spoke of evicting all loyalists from the six counties of the north, toward the end of the conflict Adams would concede that the loyalists were a political reality in Northern Ireland and as such, must be part of any lasting settlement.

¹⁷³ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.309.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p.311.

¹⁷⁵ David McKittrick and David McVea, *Making Sense of the Troubles: The Story of Conflict in Northern Ireland*, Chicago: New Amsterdam Books, 2002, p.7.

2.3.2.2 Martin McGuinness

Unlike Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness was not from a family of Irish republicans.

McGuinness grew up in the bogside area of Derry and spent the majority of his youth focused on soccer, not violence. By his own admission, he was somewhat of a pacifist and to the extent that he thought about politics, he was far more interested in reform than revolution.¹⁷⁶ Working as an apprentice butcher around the time that “the Troubles” spilled onto the streets of Northern Ireland, McGuinness’ attitude hardened following the ‘Battle of the Bogside’ in August 1969. He soon joined scores of Catholic youth in throwing stones and petrol bombs at the police before graduating to full-fledged membership in the Derry faction of the PIRA by the age of 19 years old.¹⁷⁷

During his tenure with PIRA/Sinn Fein, McGuinness would go on to hold nearly every important position in the organization, including Derry IRA commander, Northern commander, chief of staff, chairman of the Army Council, Sinn Fein vice-president, Mid-Ulster MP, and Sinn Fein minister of education. Since the Derry faction of the PIRA was known as one of the fiercest, most capable units in the entire Army, McGuinness’ bona fides was rarely questioned. In part because of his reputation as a stoic military commander, McGuinness was often chosen by Adams to accompany him during important speeches to the group’s leadership. One such event was during the 1986 General Army Convention speech regarding the organizations about-face on the issue of abstention. McGuinness was selected to reassure the rank-and-file that the Provos had no intention of ending the armed struggle against the British, proclaiming, “[t]he war

¹⁷⁶ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.357.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, pp.356-357.

against British rule must continue until freedom is achieved.”¹⁷⁸

At some point though, McGuinness, like Adams, made the gradual transformation from radical to politico. The steely eyed former Derry commander was beloved by PIRA hardliners for delivering strongly worded sound bites, including his comments that “without the IRA we are on our knees. Without the IRA we are slaves. For fifteen years this generation of republicans has been off their knees. We will never be slaves again.”¹⁷⁹ McGuinness commanded respect in a way that Gerry Adams never could. He had a reputation for personal bravery and could point to a distinguished military record on an operational level.¹⁸⁰

So how could McGuinness go from hard-line militant to holding hands with the most notorious Unionist, the Reverend Ian Paisely, on the steps of the Stormont government in Belfast? One could reasonably trace the changes in McGuinness back to the early 1990s, when some of his public statements seemed to be critical of what he viewed as unnecessary PIRA violence. A PIRA bomb that exploded in the town of Enniskillen in November 1987 killed eleven civilians and drew the ire not only of the Protestant community in the North, but of many Catholics both north and south of the border. To McGuinness, the Provos were becoming careless and sloppy in their planning and execution of attacks. Publicly, and with genuine dismay, he began to criticize the conduct of the PIRA’s campaign and hinted at a need to be more parsimonious in its selection of targets.¹⁸¹

Over time, McGuinness further distanced himself from the PIRA and became known for

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p.295.

¹⁷⁹ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.343.

¹⁸⁰ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.383.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, p.342.

his work through Sinn Fein, the group's political wing. By 1998, Martin McGuinness had made a thorough metamorphosis from radical to politico and was able to take many of the PIRA's members with him. McGuinness' credibility within the organization was a major advantage when it came time for the group to lay down its weapons. Reflecting on McGuinness, Moloney recalls, "Since he was the man in charge of the day-to-day war against the British, his commitment to armed struggle seemed beyond doubt. So when [McGuinness] backed the peace process, many of the rank-and-file were prepared to follow."¹⁸² His long journey from battle-hardened PIRA veteran to Sinn Fein politician to the deputy first minister of the power-sharing government in Northern Ireland had a major effect on the evolution of the peace process.

2.3.2.3 Ivor Bell

Ivor Bell's transformation from radical to ideologue was the primary reason for the falling out between himself and his erstwhile ally, Gerry Adams. Bell had been a veteran West Belfast activist and an IRA soldier during the 1950s and 1960s. He quit when the group agreed to a cease fire toward the end of its 6 year border campaign from 1956-1962. Bell then rejoined the more radical incarnation of the IRA, the Provisionals, and was appointed commander of B Coy in the Kashmir Road area, also serving as Adams' adjutant in the Second Battalion.¹⁸³ In his many positions within the PIRA, Bell served as deputy to Martin McGuinness when he was the chief of staff and had been elevated to Brigade staff operations officer following the internment sweeps in the early 1970s.

A close confidant of Adams during the start of the PIRA's campaign, Bell's politics have

¹⁸² Ibid, p.383.

¹⁸³ Ibid, p.106.

been described by some as anarchist in nature, although as a radical Marxist and former PIRA ambassador to Libya, he also drew heavily on the ideas of Qaddafi and at various times advocated a Revolutionary Council to replace the Army Council structure.¹⁸⁴ Although initially open to electoral politics (he had participated in secret talks with British ministers in 1972), over the years Bell became increasingly radicalized and convinced that diverting resources to Sinn Féin was a waste because it took away from the armed struggle.¹⁸⁵ Between 1983 and 1984, along with like-minded ideologues in the Belfast Brigade, Bell plotted a mini coup against Adams and predicated his strategy for revolt against growing opposition to the dual strategy of the bomb and the ballot.¹⁸⁶ As a result, Bell was expelled from the PIRA and faded into relative anonymity, thus enervating the position of the remaining ideologues within the group.

2.3.2.4 Joe Cahill

More so than any other individual, Joe Cahill embodied the image of what a *true IRA man* was supposed to be. Born in 1920, he joined the IRA in the 1930s and was imprisoned at different points through the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Part of the “old school,” or “forties men” as the small group of IRA members active during the 1940s were known, Cahill had been the lynchpin to the George Harrison gun-running network in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States but left the IRA in the 1960s to protest what he saw as its “political and leftward” emphasis.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, pp.153-154.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, pp.242-245.

¹⁸⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.246.

¹⁸⁷ Cahill was part of the famous Easter 1942 Milltown diversionary ambush; see Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.382 and English, *Armed Struggle*, p.68.

Cahill was a member of the first PIRA Army Council, a founding member of NORAID, and also featured prominently at the center of the ongoing weapons deals with the Libyans in the 1980s. However, his most instrumental role in the organization was providing the credibility to validate Gerry Adams' many ideological shifts in over the years, mostly relating to the PIRA's decision to become further involved in politics. Often opposed to any attempts to broker a cease fire, Cahill changed suit in 1994, siding with Adams and catching many of the Army Council's ideologues by surprise.¹⁸⁸

Toward the end of his career, Cahill was less influential within the Army Council but still maintained a wide range of contacts and was viewed favorably by politically influential Irish-American groups in the United States. When the PIRA ultimately voted to commit to a cease-fire in 1994, it was Cahill who was dispatched to the US to assuage the fears of many that the group was not throwing in the towel, but merely playing politics.¹⁸⁹

2.3.3 Ideology

The PIRA was born of an ideological split in 1969, with staunch Marxists led by Cathal Goulding forming the Official IRA (also known as "the Stickies") and Sean MacStiofain leading what would become the Provisional IRA. At the core of the dispute was the Provisionals' commitment to violence as both a means of protection and of achieving political goals. In their thinking, the 'Gouldingites,' as they came to be called, were far too enmeshed in radical leftist politics, dreams of a global national liberation front, and Marxism—all issues which distracted

¹⁸⁸ Moloney, *A Secret History*, pp.426-427.

¹⁸⁹ Coogan, *The IRA*, pp.658-659.

them from the goal of a united Ireland. This is not to suggest that the PIRA did not have some devout Marxists, particularly among its highly influential members in prisons. But the most significant difference between the OIRA and the PIRA was the latter's Maoist-like obsession with the ascendancy of armed struggle over politics.

For the new guard, older members' ideological fervor obfuscated the IRA's traditional focus on militarism.¹⁹⁰ While many of the decisions he would make later in life usually existed in the "grey area" between politics and violence, a young Gerry Adams had no illusions about the utility of militarism. "There are those who tell us that the British Government will not be moved by armed struggle... [Yet] the history of Ireland and of colonial involvement throughout the world tells us that they will not be moved by anything else."¹⁹¹

The PIRA is typically referred to as an ethno-nationalist group. However, this description hardly does justice to explaining the intricacies of the group's ideology. The PIRA as an organization experienced considerable change throughout the years. However, one constant had always been an unwavering commitment to the Republican cause and the desire for a united Ireland free from British rule. Certainly, one can find strands of Socialist thought in many of the group's writings, both official and non-official doctrine. The PIRA even went so far as to condemn the Republic of Ireland's entry into the European Economic Community (ECC) while simultaneously voicing its disapproval with the Treaty of Rome as a tool of capitalism.¹⁹²

Combined with a strict adherence to armed resistance against what it viewed as oppressive British imperialist policies, the PIRA's political thought could most aptly be

¹⁹⁰ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.107.

¹⁹¹ Gerry Adams cited in Taylor, *Provos*, pp.283-284.

¹⁹² English, *Armed Struggle*, p.158. The Treaty of Rome is thought of as the first step toward European integration.

described as an amalgamation of “socialist politics and violent aggression.”¹⁹³ Over the course of its lifespan, the organization espoused affinity for groups in Cuba, South Africa, Palestine, Vietnam, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Many Irish Republicans were convinced that the British presence in Northern Ireland was motivated by economic gain, not cultural affinity, and certainly not for providing governance beyond Loyalist communities (even though Catholics were eligible for, and many did receive, welfare benefits from the British state).

What the conflict was *not* about was religion. Given the animosity between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, one could not be blamed, at least initially, for mistaking the conflict as a religious struggle. But the two communities were not murdering each other over the issue of transubstantiation or burning each other’s home downs because of the Council of Trent. “There is not one IRA statement that would cite the Bible or Catholic doctrine in support of, or as justification for, any of its actions.”¹⁹⁴ On many issues, the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and the PIRA’s leadership were at odds.

The conflict in Northern Ireland involved an ethnic dimension, but at its core, the insurgency was, like all insurgencies, about politics. Though the differences were more substantive, on the face of things Catholic simply meant Nationalist, or Republican; Protestant was interchangeable with Unionist, or Loyalist. Throughout its lifespan, the Provisional IRA, or at least the most influential among its leadership, came to recognize that violence was no longer an effective means of realizing its political aspirations. Violence did advance short-term

¹⁹³ *Ibid*, p.216.

¹⁹⁴ Neumann, *Old & New Terrorism*, pp.33.

objectives, especially when paired with “armed propaganda.”¹⁹⁵ But longer-term goals, including the PIRA’s stated aim to remove any semblance of a British presence from the North, came to be seen as political problems with political solutions.

2.3.4 Popular Support

Like many successful insurgent groups, the PIRA received both state sponsorship and domestic community support for its actions. The PIRA gained legitimacy among the Catholic population in Northern Ireland because it served as a bulwark against Unionist aggression at a time when the police force of Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), proved unable and unwilling to fulfill this task. According to Richard English, “Not only were the police offering inadequate protection, they were, on occasion, the attackers from whom protection was so urgently required.”¹⁹⁶ He adds, “The unacceptability in republican (Catholic) areas of the RUC meant that the PIRA could present themselves as the effective police force in local areas; the historical sense of suffering and of losing out legitimated resistance to an order so unfair as to produce such experience.”¹⁹⁷

Since the PIRA was essentially the only group capable of maintaining law and order in Catholic areas, it took stringent measures in policing its own community. There was a deliberate attempt to appear as defenders of the areas and not strictly as enforcers of community norms. In certain respects, the PIRA was careful not to ostracize the local community, and was quite

¹⁹⁵ Rogelio Alonso, “Irish Republican Thinking Toward the Utility of Violence,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 24, Issue 2, 2001, p.141.

¹⁹⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.103.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.341.

successful in winning local support.¹⁹⁸ On occasion, particularly in the latter stages of the conflict, community policing techniques like knee-cappings and punishment beatings backfired, and supplied the COIN forces with Catholics willing to spy on the PIRA.

In effect, the PIRA was able to secure legitimacy among the Catholic population largely as a result of overwhelming mistrust of the RUC. A February 1985 poll conducted by the *Belfast Telegraph* on law and order issues in Northern Ireland showed that 96% of Protestants thought the police did their job fairly while only 47% of Catholics felt the police did their job fairly. An astounding 57% of Catholics in Northern Ireland believed that the RUC did not do its job fairly. On the question of the legal system in Northern Ireland, 57% of Catholics felt that it dispensed justice unfairly but 89% of Protestant thought it fair.¹⁹⁹

The PIRA was keenly aware of the importance of community support in executing a successful guerilla strategy. In the *Handbook for Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army*, or the Green Book as it sometimes referred to, the PIRA listed five elements for collaboration with the local population. They were as follows²⁰⁰:

- Recruiting volunteers for columns from the population of territory in which the column is operating;
- Use civil political committees among the people whose function it would be to agitate against the oppressor, get new members for guerillas, organize supplies for

¹⁹⁸ As I alluded to earlier in the chapter, there is a slippery slope from protection to predation. In the penultimate stages of the group's existence, the PIRA began to be viewed by some in the Catholic population as predators and thugs. For more information on punishment beatings and knee cappings by the PIRA, see John Horgan, *The Psychology of Terrorism*, London: Routledge, 2005, pp. 41-45.

¹⁹⁹ Results of a *Belfast Telegraph* poll from February 1985 on attitudes to the issue of law and order in Northern Ireland. The poll was conducted through a mailed questionnaire to a panel of 1,200 households recruited through a systematic random sample of the electoral register. Some 955 completed replies were received giving a response rate of 79.5%, <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/issues/politics/polls.htm> last accessed January 18, 2012.

²⁰⁰ *Handbook for Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army: Notes on Guerrilla Warfare*, Boulder: Palladin Press, 1985, 17-18.

columns, provide transportation for guerillas, lead the people in a campaign of active and passive resistance to enemy occupation;

- Have guerilla agents working among civilian population collecting information;
- Use part-time guerillas who would continue in civilian occupations yet be available for active service when called on. Thus local companies would be built up and used as reserves when the occasion warranted;
- Build up liaison between guerillas and people until such time as it was perfect. When the people suffer under enemy oppression for aiding the guerillas the latter would help and protect the people.

And while the support that the PIRA received from the Republic of Ireland and the United States could most aptly be described as passive, it nonetheless contributed directly to the group's ability to achieve prominence and longevity.²⁰¹ But it was the support of the Catholic population in Northern Ireland proper that was so crucial to the longevity of the PIRA. And, according to Cronin, "terrorist groups generally cannot survive without either active or passive support from surrounding populations."²⁰² The PIRA collected "donations," from the Catholics in Northern Ireland who viewed its existence as crucial to their own survival and would therefore do anything necessary to ensure its continuation.²⁰³

²⁰¹ For a background on support for the PIRA in the United States, see the finance section of this paper as well as English, *Armed Struggle*, pp. 115-17. For more information on the role of the Republic of Ireland with PIRA, see Coogan, *The IRA*, pp. 522-34.

²⁰² Cronin provides examples of active support, such as hiding members, raising money, and joining the organization. Passive support includes ignoring obvious signs of terrorist activity, declining to cooperate with police investigations, sending money to organizations that act as fronts for the group, and expressing support of the group's objectives. Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups," *International Security*, Vol.31, No.1, Summer 2006, p.27.

²⁰³ Coogan, *The IRA*, p.581.

2.3.5 Public Relations/Propaganda

The use of public relations and propaganda in modern day insurgency is considered ‘a given.’ With the ubiquity of social media and the low cost of communication technology, news that the Taliban use the social media site Twitter to report attacks (many of them fictitious or prone to hyperbole) is met with a yawn. When the PIRA was beginning its campaign of terror against the British state in the early 1970s, media was considered a fairly unique innovation. The PIRA developed its own newspaper, Dublin-based *An Phoblacht*, the first edition of which appeared in early 1970.²⁰⁴ In June 1970 the Provos resurrected *The Republican News*, which would become the most widely read newspaper in the North. The PIRA used its newspapers for three main reasons.

First, the PIRA used its newspapers to justify its actions on both moral and political grounds. When PIRA operations went awry and innocent bystanders were killed or injured, the Provos tried to explain the problem away through propaganda, always directing blame toward the British. Second, *An Phoblacht* and *Republican News* were used to provide an outlet for Sinn Fein, once the organization began to contest elections. The media element of the conflict became a more important feature of Republican strategy as Sinn Fein took on greater importance and elevated itself beyond its former status as “the IRA’s poor second cousin.”²⁰⁵ A key figure in the PIRA’s media activities was Danny Morrison, a former editor of a magazine for the Belfast College of Business Studies, who took over as the editor of *Republican News* in 1975. With Morrison at its head, *Republican News* became “more impressively edited and more

²⁰⁴ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.115.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, *The Provisional IRA*, London: Corgi Books, 1992, p.330.

professional.”²⁰⁶ Third, both PIRA periodicals were used to explain the group’s strategy, especially as it changed, to numerous audiences including: the PIRA’s own members, its wider community of supporters, the Irish-American diaspora, British government officials, and anyone else willing to listen.

2.4 STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

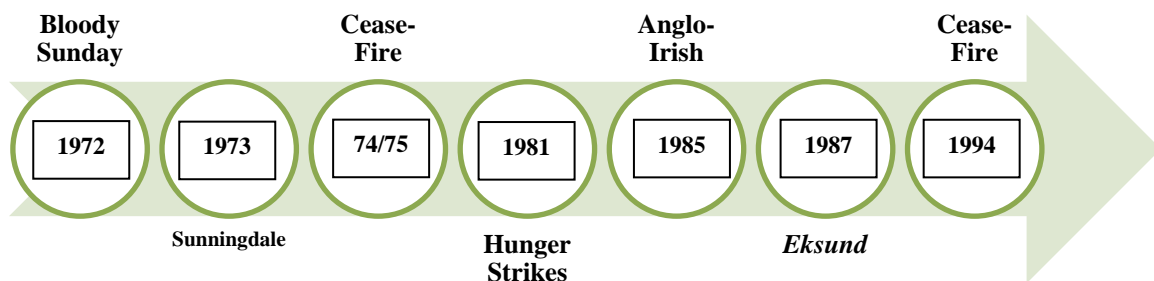


Figure 5: Timeline of PIRA Seminal Events, Attempts at Conflict Resolution, and MHS

²⁰⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.181.

2.4.1 Goals/Objectives

The goals and objectives of the PIRA were clearly outlined in the group's Constitution²⁰⁷ and can be summarized in three main points: to guard and honor and uphold the sovereignty and unity of the Republic of Ireland; to support the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic based on the 1916 Proclamation; to support the establishment of, and uphold, a lawful government in sole and absolute control of the Republic. Yet, as with most groups that achieve the longevity of the PIRA, goals and objectives are often modified and change over time.

The political maturation of the PIRA was a process that unfolded over three decades. For the PIRA, the road from 'the bullet to the ballot' was a circuitous one, fraught with setbacks—both major and minor—along the way. The organization's first experience with electoral success came in 1981 when Bobby Sands ran for Parliament while on hunger strike in a Belfast prison. The next major step was the reevaluation of the group's long established principle of political abstentionism which came in 1986 when Sinn Fein allowed successful candidates to take their seats in the Irish parliament (the Dail).²⁰⁸

A critical sea change in Republican thinking occurred in 1994 with the declaration of the PIRA's first unilateral ceasefire. According to Neumann, "In evolutionary terms, the 1994 ceasefire was significant in that 'armed struggle' was not considered to be the *sine qua non* of Republican strategic thinking anymore, and that participation and 'access' could make up for armed force."²⁰⁹ But to what end could the sudden about face in the PIRA's strategic thinking be

²⁰⁷ Viewed during archival research conducted at New York University's Tamiment Library "Irish Republicanism Collection, May 2012, http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/aia_022/admininfo.html .

²⁰⁸ This caused a split in the group and led to the formation of the Continuity Irish Republican Army.

²⁰⁹ Peter Neumann, "The Bullet and the Ballot Box: The Case of the IRA," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.28, Iss.6, 2005, p.953.

attributed? Alas, the goals of the group remained the same—the expulsion of British forces from Northern Ireland and a United Ireland, one nation North and South. However, two major factors altered the PIRA’s political outlook. First, Sinn Fein’s participation in the democratic process led it gradually to engage other political actors—first constitutional Nationalists like the Social Democratic and Labor Party (SDLP)—then representatives of the British government and elements of the Unionist majority.²¹⁰

The second major factor contributing to the shift in Republican thinking was the recognition that demographics mattered. The ‘demographic time bomb,’ as it came to be known, foreshadowed future realities on the ground. A steadily growing Catholic population would eventually usurp the Protestants as a majority in the North, and within the existing political framework, this would allow the Irish Nationalists (at least in theory) to represent a majority in Northern Ireland and cede the group a democratic vote, thus nullifying the armed struggle.²¹¹

2.4.2 Seminal Events

Policies like internment without trial (1971) and incidents like Bloody Sunday (1972) and the hunger strikes of 1981 were seminal events in shaping the context of the insurgency in its formative stages. Because these events were interpreted by the Catholic population as extremely draconian and one-sided, credence was lent to the argument being made by ideologues of the

²¹⁰ A 1992 Sinn Fein/PIRA policy document titled *Towards a Lasting Peace* recognized for the first time that the resolution of the insurgency required a settlement between Nationalists and Unionists, not just between Nationalists and the British government. Neumann, “The Bullet and the Ballot Box,” p.956.

²¹¹ Interview with Peter Neumann, November 4, 2011.

PIRA that armed resistance, and armed resistance alone, could repulse the British from Northern Ireland.

2.4.2.1 Internment without Trial

British intelligence and counterintelligence played a major role in combating PIRA terrorism, not only in Ireland, but overseas as well. Through subversion, infiltration, and espionage, British intelligence was able to severely limit PIRA operations and attacks. However, intelligence was not always so reliable. In the first phase of the insurgency, COIN force HUMINT was especially poor.²¹² In an effort to obtain information on the Provos, a violent and well-organized new version of a century old organization, the COIN forces implemented several policies, internment foremost among them, which would have a counterproductive effect on security force efforts throughout Northern Ireland.

The policy of internment without trial was implemented in August 1971 and consisted of sweeping up large numbers of Catholics to be detained without access to lawyers or trials.²¹³ The policy of internment without trial was a direct result of the intersection between intelligence and policy. On the one hand, there was immense political pressure being applied on London from the Northern Irish government to introduce this draconian measure.²¹⁴ But, because the Army did not have quality intelligence on suspected PIRA members, the arrests were counterproductive. Indeed, during the opening stages of what was referred to as Operation Demetrius, 342 individuals were arrested by the British Army and police—fewer than one

²¹² Aaron Edwards, “Misapplying Lessons Learned? Analyzing the Utility of British Counterinsurgency Strategy in Northern Ireland, 1971-1976,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.21, No.2, p.308.

²¹³ Initially, no Protestants were detained as a result of this policy. Coogan, *The IRA*, p.342.

²¹⁴ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.139.

hundred of them, less than one-third—had any connection whatsoever to the PIRA.²¹⁵

Other extreme tactics employed by the COIN forces were the use of Diplock Courts and “supergrass” witnesses. Diplock Courts depended on the confessions of the accused while in the custody of the RUC, often after interrogations that employed the use of torture. Another “extra-judicial” practice sanctioned by the Special Powers Act was the use of “supergrass” witnesses, who were essentially convicted terrorists who agreed to testify against their former comrades in exchange for legal immunity.²¹⁶

The effects of this policy proved devastating, providing a boon to PIRA recruitment and contributing significantly to resentment against the British Army, which in turn made intelligence gathering even more difficult. Commenting on the effects of internment, Ed Moloney observes, “Internment enlarged the IRA into a six-county wide army and transformed it into a force that could now seriously challenge British rule in Northern Ireland.”²¹⁷ English concurs, “It remains clear that internment helped to invigorate that which it had been intended by the authorities to uproot.”²¹⁸ The events that followed compounded problems even further.

2.4.2.2 “Bloody Sunday” (1972)

The clumsiness of the British Army was due as much to deliberate British policy as it was a consequence of “out-of-date” intelligence.²¹⁹ This antiquated intelligence led to a disastrous

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Tony Geraghty, *The Irish War: The Hidden Conflict between the IRA and British Intelligence*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, pp.95-101.

²¹⁷ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.103.

²¹⁸ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.141.

²¹⁹ Bradley W.C. Bamford, “The Role and Effectiveness of Intelligence in Northern Ireland,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Volume 20, Number 4, December 2005, p.583.

operation on January 30, 1972 when British paratroopers opened fire on unarmed Civil Rights marchers who had organized to protest the policy of internment.²²⁰ The events of “Bloody Sunday” left 13 unarmed civilians dead. Referring to the Parachute Regiment deployed to respond to the protesters, Richard English notes, “Likely to use extreme force rather than delicacy, the ‘Paras’ were hardly the most appropriate body for carrying out an arrest operation in such a volatile setting as Derry in January 1972.”²²¹ The British Army was no longer seen as a viable peacekeeping force. Following Bloody Sunday, the Army lost its status as neutral and indeed came to be seen as “the pig in the middle.”²²² The loss of credibility with the Catholic population made intelligence gathering far more cumbersome. British COIN doctrine emphasizes that “intelligence takes time, and much depends on building up mutual confidence between the security forces and the local populations.”²²³ The British Army was particularly ill-suited for such a mission, especially a regiment with a reputation for brutality like the Parachute Regiment.²²⁴

Bloody Sunday can be seen as a pivotal event, indeed a tipping point, in the history of the insurgency for several reasons. First, as mentioned above, this event caused the COIN force to suffer a loss of credibility with the population whose acquiescence and cooperation they depended on for intelligence gathering. British intelligence would need at least another decade

²²⁰ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.151.

²²¹ *Ibid.* p.154.

²²² This term, “pig in the middle,” is taken from a book by Desmond Hammil.

²²³ Ministry of Defence, Defence Council, *Land Operations Volume III- Counter-Revolutionary Operations*, London: Ministry of Defence 29 August 1969, Part I ‘Principles and General Aspects’, para 261, from Bamford, 586.

²²⁴ For more on the reputation of the Parachute Regiment’s brutal and aggressive behavior, see English, *Armed Struggle*, pp.154-55.

before it could claim consistent intelligence victories against the insurgents. Second, this event strengthened the hand of the ideologues among the insurgent leadership. Violence must be met with violence, they argued. Unarmed protest was equated with surrender. The organization was deluged with young, hot-headed recruits committed to achieving revenge. By some estimates, Bloody Sunday led more Irish Catholics to join the insurgency than *any other single action by the British*.²²⁵ Third, the incident caused outrage in the United States and brought the nearly two year old conflict to the attention of Irish-Americans, some of whom were eager to support the Provisional IRA with guns, money, and political support.

2.4.2.3 Hunger Strikes (1981)

The hunger strikes of 1981 were another major event that shaped the context of the conflict and, similar to Bloody Sunday nearly ten years earlier, had the effect of boosting PIRA recruitment and contributing to the lore of the organization. The death of ten hunger strikers before the eyes of the world broadened sympathy for the Republican cause, and with sympathy came a much needed influx of money and guns. But more importantly, for sure, was that 1981 saw the PIRA's first taste of political success, as hunger striker Bobby Sands ran for and was elected to the British parliament as representative for Fermanagh-South Tyrone.²²⁶ Internment and Bloody Sunday resulted in a certain degree of bloodlust, boosting the profile of those capable of and willing to use violence to exact revenge. But the death of the hunger strikers and the legend of Sands led to a different outcome. A PIRA man popular enough to run for and win a seat in Westminster caused many within the organization to rethink the issue of abstention and for the

²²⁵ Ibid, p.151.

²²⁶ Brian Feeney, *Sinn Fein: A Hundred Turbulent Years*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003, pp.290-291.

first time, begin thinking about devising a transition from “the bullet to the ballot.”

The hunger strikes empowered the politicians of the group, who argued that politics did indeed have a place in the struggle. Because the incident involved such a wide range of actors, from British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to the Catholic Church, it had a profound effect on all parties to the conflict, but none more than the PIRA. The empowerment of those advocating a change in strategy at this time would not have been possible without Sands’ election according to Danny Morrison, because prior to this event, “the movement was totally suspicious of politics, because politics equals compromise.”²²⁷

The impact of the hunger strikes cannot be overstated. Sands’ election as MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone “made it possible, much sooner than anyone had imagined, for Sinn Féin to fully embrace electoral politics.”²²⁸ “It was a realization that would propel the organization into serious electoral politics and herald a phase in the Provisionals’ department that would usher in the peace process,” recalls Moloney. But in an insurgency, politics are but one way to vie for power. As the next section will point out, each side in the conflict struggled for military supremacy in an attempt to deal a knockout blow to the enemy – but failed to achieve this.

2.4.3 Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

From the very early stages of the conflict, secret, backchannel talks took place between members of the insurgency and leadership within the British government. The Good Friday Agreement is

²²⁷ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.205.

²²⁸ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.210.

merely a broad framework that maps out how the government in Stormont should administer the state. This agreement was decades in the work. Father Alec Reid was a key facilitator in the early stages of the talks representing the PIRA. As early as 1974, the Dublin government was engaged in backchannel talks with the UVF. So the sides were talking about peace for a long time, but the conflict trudged along for years.

The backchannel talks were crucial because as a result of continuous back channel contacts (track two diplomacy) both sides knew who their partners were and knew who they were not.²²⁹ Encouraging backchannel talks and attempts at informal diplomacy have clear policy implications here. Previous negotiations and agreements between Nationalists, Unionists, and the British government would affect how future negotiations unfolded and from that perspective are important to analyze.

2.4.3.1 Sunningdale Agreement (1973)

The Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 saw the only tangible attempt at political reconciliation throughout the entire decade. The impetus may have been the fact that the PIRA killed more people (235) the previous year, or recognition within the highest ranks of the British government that incidents like Bloody Sunday and internment without trial had merely served to fuel PIRA recruitment and fundraising.²³⁰ Nevertheless, Sunningdale turned out to be a monumental failure and succeeded only in alienating *both* Unionists and Nationalists alike.

The terms of the agreement included: a devolved legislative assembly, all-Ireland

²²⁹ Interview with Tony Novosel, Pittsburgh, PA, November 15, 2011.

²³⁰ 1972 was the most deadly year of the 30 year conflict as a whole, with the PIRA killing 235 people and the total number killed that year at 497. English, *Armed Struggle*, p.379.

institutional cooperation and consultation, and a human rights provision.²³¹ Amazingly, both unionists and nationalists thought their side comprised too much in this deal. The result was a coordinated strike by the unionist Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) and increased friction between Sinn Fein and the SDLP on the nationalists' side.

In the lead up to the agreement, British COIN forces arrested and detained elements of the Belfast Brigade's leadership thought to be completely opposed to any form of negotiation, including Gerry Adams and Brendan Hughes. By targeting the hardliners in the group, the British were hoping to shape the leadership in a way that would make the PIRA more amenable to doing a deal. In spite of a clever strategy and an aggressive attempt to gather political intelligence on the PIRA, the power sharing agreement collapsed which, Moloney remembers, "seemed to symbolize to the outside world the addiction of the parties in Northern Ireland to their ancient quarrel and spoke to an almost inherited inability on the part of the belligerents to entertain reasonable solutions."²³²

Sunningdale foreshadowed just how difficult it would be to reach an agreement that could ameliorate the grievances of the diversity of constituencies now involved in the conflict. This was not simply an attempt to rectify Protestant versus Catholic. The insurgency metastasized into a multi-dimensional affair with competing interests on all sides—PIRA, SDLP, UUP, DUP, and both the Irish and British governments. Violence resumed and both sides dug in. The next major landmark in the political process would not come for another dozen years.

²³¹ Ibid, p.165.

²³² Ibid, pp.141-142.

2.4.3.2 Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985)

Toward this end, the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement made remarkable strides and was viewed as “an accord that was profoundly to alter the framework within which the IRA were to operate in subsequent years.”²³³ Essentially, the agreement gave the ROI a continuing and consultative role in the affairs of Northern Ireland, with increased responsibility for border security. The insurgent leadership correctly realized that it was being marginalized through these negotiations. Sinn Fein/PIRA leader Gerry Adams commented on the Anglo-Irish Agreement shortly after it was signed, lamenting that it had been, “designed to isolate and defeat republicans.”²³⁴

In order to avoid being shut out of the political framework London and Dublin appeared to be building *without* the PIRA, Adams recognized that a move toward political inclusion was a necessary next step. After a review of the effects that a mutually hurting stalemate had on all sides in the conflict, the discussion turns to the changes taking place within the PIRA. Throughout the 1980s, as the organization’s membership, most poignantly its leadership, began to change shape, ideologues gave way to radicals and radicals in turn to politicians. This shift was most evident in the post-Cold War era, evidenced by such significant political milestones as the Downing St. Declaration (1993) and thereafter the Belfast Agreement (1998).

2.4.3.3 Downing St. Declaration (1993)

As time passes and history is recounted by those who lived it, we are able to learn more about the peace process in Northern Ireland and the seminal events leading up to the historic agreement to put an end to all forms of political violence in the country. One of the more interesting threads

²³³ Ibid, pp.240-241.

²³⁴ Ibid, p.242.

that have been unraveled since the end of the conflict has been the frequency of secret back channel talks between all elements of the conflict in Northern Ireland. To the public, the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 was a joint British-Irish statement crafted by the British Prime Minister, John Major, and his Irish counterpart, Albert Reynolds. However, as we now know, “what made the Downing Street document exceptional was that it was modeled on ideas and concepts evolved, initiated, and developed in a secret dialogue whose instigator [Gerry Adams] was the head of the political organization pledged to overthrow the principle [of consent] by gun and bomb.”²³⁵ The main tenets of the Downing Street Declaration (DSD) that caused the biggest stir were the principle of self-determination and the principle of consent. Both of these ideas were conceptualized in paragraph 4 of the document, which stated:

The British Government agree that it is for the people of the island of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts respectively, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish. They reaffirm, as a binding obligation that they will for their part introduce the necessary legislation to give effect to this, or equally to any measure of agreement on future relationships in Ireland which the people of Ireland may themselves freely so determine without external impediment.²³⁶

In laymen’s terms, it would be the right of the people of Ireland as a whole, both North and South, to determine the fate of its people, to include the Unionist majority in the North. John Hume, leader of the SDLP, thought that the Declaration was an explicit refutation of the PIRA’s call to violence. The British openly declared no self- interest—economic, political, or military—in the affairs of Ireland. But what angered Irish republicans, especially the politically active and

²³⁵ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.286.

²³⁶ Paragraph four of the Downing Street Declaration, 1993, <http://www.dfa.ie/home/index.aspx?id=8734>, last accessed January 18, 2012.

influential members in the prisons, were that the document failed to include an overt commitment by the British to withdraw its forces from Northern Ireland.²³⁷

2.4.4 Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS)

In June 1972, just six months after the events of Bloody Sunday in which British security forces shot 13 unarmed demonstrators, British ministers, including then Northern Ireland Secretary William Whitelaw, met with Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness to discuss a possible resolution to the conflict.²³⁸ The talks ultimately went nowhere, and the PIRA called off a short-lived cease-fire amidst accusations that the British were not serious about the negotiations to begin with. Three years later, in 1975, British officials met with the PIRA's highest ranking decision making body, the Army Council, only to have these talks break down over PIRA accusations that the British were merely using the talks as a stalling tactic while attempting to figure out a way to defeat the PIRA once and for all. I argue that by the late 1980s, *both* sides recognized that a military stalemate had been reached, with neither side able to muster the military might necessary to escalate the conflict into a situation where a clear advantage could be pressed.

While the recognition of a mutually hurting stalemate is not uncommon, the fact that by the late 1980s both sides seem to have reached this same conclusion was poignant. In remarks delivered to a press agency in November 1989, Northern Ireland Secretary of State Peter Brooke

²³⁷ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.413.

²³⁸ Andrew Mumford, "Puncturing the Counterinsurgency Myth: Britain and Irregular Warfare in the Past, Present, and Future," U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, September 2011, p.12.

admitted that the PIRA and the British were deadlocked in a military stalemate.²³⁹ For their part, the Provos had reached this point too. An unnamed PIRA member described the situation as such: “Our aim is to create such psychological damage to the Brits that they’ll withdraw, sick of the expense, the hassle, the coffins coming back to England. But we know we can’t defeat them in a military sense, no more than they can beat us. So there’s kind of a stalemate.”²⁴⁰ Part of the negotiating process had been brinksmanship, with both sides aware of their own weaknesses, but never ready to admit this to the adversary for fear of appearing weak.²⁴¹

2.4.4.1 Ceasefire (1974-1975)

In a mutually hurting stalemate, both parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which neither can escalate to victory and the deadlock is edging toward unbearable costs for each side. In a conflict that lasted as long as the insurgency in Northern Ireland, there are likely to be several openings, or “ripe moments,” for the realization of a MHS by one or more sides. The 1974-1975 ceasefire was agreed upon as both sides recognized the futility of tit-for-tat violence which was leading to a sharp increase in deaths on both sides. Army Council members Daithi O’Conaill and Ruairi O’ Bradaigh had high hopes for what could be considered the first serious opening for a potential breakthrough in talks since the conflict began six years earlier.

From his prison cage in Long Kesh, Gerry Adams and his supporters argued vehemently against a cease-fire. Indeed, for the remainder of his career, Adams seized upon the 1974-1975 ceasefire as an example of what could go wrong when his point of view was disregarded. In Adams’ assessment, the cease-fire led to several negative outcomes for the PIRA, two of which

²³⁹ Ibid, p.247.

²⁴⁰ PIRA figure quoted in Coogan, *The IRA*, p.604.

²⁴¹ Interview with Tony Novosel, Pittsburgh, PA, November 15, 2011.

contributed to the mutually hurting stalemate and thus prolonged the insurgency.

First, the cessation in fighting allowed the COIN force the time needed to resupply and reorganize its intelligence apparatus. No substantial political issues were resolved and during this lull in fighting the British devised and implemented a policy of “‘Ulsterization,’ normalization, and criminalization.”²⁴² Britain had convinced the PIRA to accept a cease-fire under the premise that discussions would focus on “structures of disengagement,” leading to a British withdrawal from Northern Ireland.²⁴³ The fruitless negotiations had a profound impact on Gerry Adams, who became convinced that the British had negotiated in bad faith. Convincing the future leader of the PIRA that political progress was a worthwhile avenue to pursue would be an arduous process, evolving slowly over the course of the next two decades.

Second, the cease-fire contributed to a Loyalist offensive directed at Catholic civilians, particularly in Belfast.²⁴⁴ Since the Provos’ claimed to be the protectors of the Catholic minority in the North, Loyalist paramilitaries like the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) believed that by murdering ordinary Catholics they could disprove the PIRA’s claim and thus the group’s *raison d’etre*. Once the Catholic population realized that the PIRA could no longer protect it, pressure would mount on the group to disband.²⁴⁵ This twisted logic of the Loyalists led to the rise of demented gangs like the Shankill Butchers, known for torturing their victims before killing them. In turn, the PIRA responded with an intensified campaign of its own, also directed at civilians. Neither group could lay a valid claim to being the more violent outfit nor could any

²⁴² Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.145.

²⁴³ Ibid, p.143.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, p.145.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

group break the stalemate. A morass settled in as both the urban and rural settings of Northern Ireland devolved into an orgy of sectarian violence.²⁴⁶

2.4.4.2 Impact of the *Eksund* (1987)

Weapons procurement for the Provisional Irish Republican Army was not a major source of concern for the group when the insurgency began in the late 1960s. Accordingly, the PIRA's predecessor, the Original IRA, had a network in place since at least the 1950s and found it "a simple task" to reactivate this network once it became necessary.²⁴⁷ The main cog in the PIRA's gun-running network was a County Mayo insurgent and veteran member of the PIRA, George Harrison, whose contacts reached back to New York and a mafia-associated arms dealer of Corsican background, George DeMeo.²⁴⁸ The small group also included Joe Cahill and Liam Cotter and provided hundreds of light, powerful, collapsible rifles known as Armalites, which would become the PIRA's signature weapon. When the Harrison network was disrupted, arms supplies to the PIRA from the US were 'infrequent and erratic.'

While the PIRA would eventually reconstitute its arms network through a Libyan connection, an even more robust supply than it had ever had, the group's arsenal was not always sufficient. In the United States, at least, arms procurement for the PIRA was seen as "no longer

²⁴⁶ There is a debate in the literature about the PIRA's campaign of terrorism and to what extent it was sectarian in nature. For more, see Henry Patterson, "Sectarianism Revisited: The Provisional IRA Campaign in a Border Region of Northern Ireland," *Terrorism & Political Violence*, Vol.22, No.3, 2010, pp.337-356; Robert White, "The Irish Republican Army: An Assessment of Sectarianism," *Terrorism & Political Violence*, Vol.9, No.1, 1997, pp.20-55; Steve Bruce, "Victim Selection in Ethnic Conflict: Motives and Attitudes in Irish Republicanism," *Terrorism & Political Violence*, Vol.9, No.1, 1997, pp.56-71; Robert W. White, "The Irish Republican Army and Sectarianism: Moving Beyond the Anecdote," *Terrorism & Political Violence*, Vol.9, No.2, 1997, pp.120-131.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p.16.

²⁴⁸ English, *Armed Struggle*, pp.116-117.

a patriotic lark but rather a risky endeavor,” according to J. Bowyer Bell.²⁴⁹ Over time, acquiring weapons became more difficult, which in turn constrained what the PIRA could do from an operational standpoint.

A combination of British pressure, backlash from brutal attacks, and increased scrutiny in the US forced the PIRA to look to Qaddafi as an alternative supplier of arms and explosives.²⁵⁰ The Libyan connection proved vital not just to the continuation of the insurgency, but also to its intensity. Qaddafi was able to supply the Provos with a diverse array of weaponry, including Semtex (a Czechoslovakian made odorless plastic explosive), Russian RPG-7 rockets and Kalashnikov rifles, Chinese Simarol rifles, Armalites, and M60 machine guns.²⁵¹ Libyan-supplied weaponry allowed the PIRA to plan more ambitious operations, both in Northern Ireland and abroad. Throughout 1987, the organization received four major shipments of weapons totaling 150 tons.

Always close observers of other “wars of liberation,” the Provos were well aware of the Vietnamese defeat of the United States during the 1960s and 1970s. Drawing parallels between the two conflicts, the PIRA was planning to launch its own Tet Offensive against the British in an effort to drive the Army once and for all from Irish soil.²⁵² The Irish Tet Offensive would come in the form of *The Eksund*, a Panamanian-registered vessel loaded with: 1,000 Romanian-made AK-47 automatic rifles, one million rounds of ammunition, 430 grenades, 12 rocket

²⁴⁹ Bell, *The IRA, 1968-2000, Analysis of a Secret Army*, p.185.

²⁵⁰ Byman, “Passive Sponsors,” p.1311

²⁵¹ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.344.

²⁵² The idea of the Tet Offensive as a turning point in the Vietnam War continues to be a matter of debate. Although the offensive was not a major military victory for the Vietnamese, it was a political tipping point which convinced the American public (rightly or wrongly) that the war could not be won.

propelled grenade launchers with ample supplies of grenades and rockets, 12 heavy Russian DHSK machine guns, more than 50 SAM-7-ground-to-air missiles, 2,000 electric detonators, 4,700 fuses, 106 mm cannons, general purpose machine guns, anti-tank missile launchers, flame throwers, and two tons of Semtex plastic explosives.²⁵³

The Eksund never made the trip from Tripoli back to Ireland. An informer betrayed the operation and French authorities boarded the ship before it could reach its destination. The capture of *The Eksund* in 1987 was a devastating blow to the PIRA and its hopes of escalating the insurgency against the British. Still, the group had managed to import more than enough weaponry to *continue* its struggle for the foreseeable future, much of which was hidden in bunkers in the Republic of Ireland under the careful watch of the Quartermaster General.²⁵⁴

The capture of the *Eksund* had a major impact on the PIRA's resources. Thinking about the loss of weaponry in terms of a mutually hurting stalemate, the loss of these weapons did not mean that the Provos couldn't continue their long war against the British government. In fact, as Richard English comments, "by the time the *Eksund* was captured, the Libyan connection had already provided the IRA with the means of continuing its war."²⁵⁵ But the point here is that, without that shipment of weapons, the PIRA was unable to conduct its 'Tet Offensive' and escalate the war in the way the group knew that it needed to in order to "get over the hump."

With the capture of the *Eksund*, the group began to discuss chances for success on the military front against England. Simultaneously, an ongoing effort by British intelligence to

²⁵³ Moloney, *A Secret History*, pp.3-4.

²⁵⁴ The Quartermaster General, or QMG (an Army council delegate.), is charged with procurement, transportation, and storage of armaments into the 32 counties plus the Northern Command's operations areas. Typically, resources such as guns, rifles, ammunition and explosives, rockets, etc. are monitored by regional Quartermasters.

²⁵⁵ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.249.

infiltrate the PIRA leadership was beginning to yield devastating results. An expose in *The Atlantic* detailed exactly how a secret British intelligence outfit, the Force Research Unit (FRU), surreptitiously served as a double agent in the PIRA, sowing doubt and discord among the highest ranks of the insurgency. According to Matthew Teague, “British spies subverted the IRA from within, leaving it in military ruin, and Irish Republicans...have largely shifted their weight to Sinn Fein and its peaceable, political efforts.”²⁵⁶

2.4.4.3 Cease Fire (1994)

The leadership of the PIRA looked back upon the cease-fire of 1974-1975 and vowed that never again would the group commit to a cease-fire until “the Brits declared for withdrawal.”²⁵⁷ In practice, even the utterance of the phrase “cease-fire” had become so discredited that it was rarely used. Yet by 1994 the war had been going on for 25 years and in spite of the political “stepping stones” of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Downing Street Declaration, there was still no end in sight. A concerted political-military strategy was needed to break the impasse.

While Adams and a small group of advisers were negotiating the political terms for a cease-fire, the Army Council worked out the details on the military side. For the PIRA, the terms of a cease fire included a complete halt to recruiting, military training, targeting activity, and intelligence gathering for operational activity.²⁵⁸ These prohibitions applied to PIRA units in Northern Ireland as well as the Republic. British COIN forces, in response, would temporarily halt police actions to include surveillance, imprisonment, and harassment of the insurgents.

²⁵⁶ Matthew Teague, “Double Blind.”

²⁵⁷ Coogan, *The IRA*, p.396.

²⁵⁸ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.425.

When the vote for whether or not to support the cease-fire was put before the Army Council, five were in favor (Adams, McGuinness, Doherty, Cahill, and the South Armagh adjutant of Northern Command), one abstained (Slab Murphy), and one voted against it (Kevin McKenna).²⁵⁹

The 1994 cease-fire was a definite recognition of a stalemate between the insurgents and the COIN force. But more than that, the cease-fire was a recognition of “conflict fatigue” on all sides. Unlike the cease-fire twenty years earlier, this pause in hostilities would not be used as an opportunity to rest and rearm, but on the contrary, the small respite in fighting would be seized upon to move forward with a genuine push for peace. The 1994 cease-fire was a tipping point in the conflict in Northern Ireland. Figure 16 below details the total number of people killed in different time periods, as well as the number killed by the PIRA. Although the Belfast Agreement was not signed until 1998, and indeed even after the signing of the agreement splinter groups like the RIRA continued to fight, there was a significant drop off in the number of deaths, both overall as well as those killed by the PIRA. But what explains this tipping point?

In *The Tipping Point*, Gladwell describes the precipitous drop in crime in New York City in the 1990s, where within a five year period between 1992 and 1997, murders dropped 64.3 percent and crime decreased by nearly 50 percent.²⁶⁰ While Gladwell recognizes ancillary factors at play, including changes in the New York Police Department’s strategy, a decline in the crack trade, gentrification of previously dangerous neighborhoods, and an improved economy, his main conclusion is that “the small number of people in the small number of situations in which the police or the new social forces had some impact started behaving very differently, and

²⁵⁹ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.426.

²⁶⁰ Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, pp.5-6.

that behavior somehow spread to other would-be criminals in similar situations.”²⁶¹ Similarly, in Northern Ireland, ancillary factors had an effect on the ebb of violence—war weariness among both the Catholic and Protestant populations, the incarceration and death of dangerous terrorists and paramilitaries, and decades of secret back channel negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Still, these factors alone cannot account for the dramatic decrease in deaths.

Figure 6: Conflict-related Deaths in Northern Ireland, 1969-1998²⁶²

Although the 1994 cease-fire did not end the conflict, it did tip the insurgency toward negotiation. In an example of what Gladwell calls the “Law of the Few,” PIRA leader Gerry Adams was able to sell the idea of curbing Republican violence to even the most ardent and committed ideologues within his inner circle. The idea that Sinn Fein represented the future of

²⁶¹ Ibid, p.8.

²⁶² Data from English, *Armed Struggle*, p.379.

Irish Republicanism took root and spread like a contagion, as the ideas, attitudes, behaviors, and actions of those involved in the conflict were transformed, seemingly overnight.

2.4.5 Decision-Making Structure and Process

2.4.5.1 Army Council/General Army Convention

The Army Council consisted of seven members and served as the IRA's supreme decision making body. More than just a military commission, the Army Council was considered to be the rightful government of the country of Ireland and by extension, it has attained a spiritual, almost sacred status among the PIRA's members.²⁶³ The Army Council was responsible for determining PIRA policy and its roles and powers were clearly outlined by the group's constitution. While its prime function was to "conclude peace or declare war," the Army Council had a number of secondary responsibilities of great importance, such as determining the group's rules of engagement (ROE), stipulating its membership regulations, choosing a chief of staff, and enforcing a disciplinary code, including procedures and penalties for court martial and even execution.²⁶⁴

Within the Army Council there was a clear division between the radicals and the ideologues. On one side were the radicals like Adams and Pat Doherty, who were well on the way to becoming politicians. On the other, however, were dyed-in-the-wool ideologues like "Slab" Murphy and Kevin McKenna, true PIRA soldiers who only tolerated the political speak of the organization because they were repeatedly reassured that it was all part of an elaborate

²⁶³ Ibid, p.376.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p.378.

hoax developed to secure a pan-nationalist alliance with the SDLP and the Irish government.²⁶⁵

Once this alliance was firm, it would be used in tandem with the PIRA's military campaign to pressure the British government to withdraw from Ireland.

2.4.5.2 Abstentionism

The PIRA's long-standing position on abstention, or refusing to sit for political office in any parliament (this included in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, or England), is best summarized by J. Bowyer Bell, who believed that in the eyes of most PIRA members, sitting in parliament or participating in electoral politics "was not only an invitation to corruption, a tainted tactic already proven sterile, but also, and most important, outrageous immorality."²⁶⁶ To be sure, the birth of the Provisional IRA emerged due in large part to a disagreement over this very issue.²⁶⁷ Those who even suggested abandoning armed struggle in favor of party politics were regarded as naïve, possessing little historical knowledge of British-Irish relations, and traitorous to the legacy of the 1916 Easter proclamation of independence and the Irish parliament of 1921, or Second Dail.

In 1986, at a General Army Convention held in County Donegal, Gerry Adams lobbied those in attendance that northern elements of the Irish republican movement should make a foray into politics south of the border by taking a seat in the Dail Eireann, or Irish parliament.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.389.

²⁶⁶ J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA*, revised 3rd edition, New Brunswick: Transaction, 1997, p.344.

²⁶⁷ In October 1969 the IRA Army Council voted against maintaining the traditional policy of abstention in the parliaments of Dublin, Belfast, and London. In addition to what many future PIRA members felt was a failure on the part of the IRA (or the Official IRA as they would be referred to following the 1969 split) to protect the Catholic population from violence, the Army Council's decision to reverse its position on the long-standing policy of abstention was the primary cause leading Sean MacStiofain and his allies to split from the Cathal Goulding-led IRA.

²⁶⁸ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.288.

Unlike Goulding, who advocated in 1969 that the IRA drop its policy of abstentionism in order to contest seats in all three parliaments (Leinster House, Stormont, and the House of Commons in Westminster), Adams eschewed the more ambitious move in favor of a pragmatic effort to elevate the importance of the PIRA's political wing, Sinn Fein. Not all PIRA delegates in attendance agreed with the decision. Ruairi O' Bradaigh and other veteran IRA hardliners walked out of the meeting and went on to found Republican Sinn Fein (RSF), along with a splinter military wing which came to be known as the Continuity Irish Republican Army (CIRA).²⁶⁹ The CIRA would claim responsibility in 1996 for the deadly bombing of a hotel in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, which was a direct effort to sabotage ongoing peace talks at the time.

Moving the PIRA closer toward the ideas and principles embodied by constitutional nationalism was, undoubtedly, a major problem for the group's hard liners and many of their friends in the United States with deep pockets. Sinn Fein first contested elections in 1982, so the move toward a less militant approach to the conflict had been evolving ever since. Deception was a necessary evil practiced by the organization's leaders. In order to mollify the concerns of the PIRA's soldiers that the group was still committed to armed struggle above all else, the leadership simply misled them.²⁷⁰ "Not meaning what one said increasingly became a defining and acceptable feature of republican political culture," notes Moloney.²⁷¹ This strategy was used to assuage the fears of the PIRA's ideologues and hawks that PIRA guns would not fall silent until the British were expelled from Northern Ireland by force and the 32 counties were united as

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p.289.

²⁷⁰ Ibid, p.390.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

one sovereign nation.

The emergence of the insurgency in Northern Ireland occurred in 1969 with the civil rights movement. The timing is important because the Catholic-Protestant divide in Northern Ireland is set against the backdrop of worldwide revolutions and ethnic discord resulting from decolonization. Catholics in Northern Ireland were hopeful as they observed the mighty British Empire retreating from its vast overseas holdings, ceding territory and granting autonomous self-rule in various parts of Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, South and East Asia. But what would be the PIRA's disposition toward negotiation? Undoubtedly, in the earliest stages of the insurgency, ideologues held the most clout—only armed struggle would force the British from Northern Ireland. However, there were various stages throughout the conflict where the decision-making apparatus of the group decided political negotiations could be advantageous. In the end, this is the vision that would prevail.

2.4.5.3 Decommissioning

Of all the myriad concerns addressed by the PIRA throughout its 30 year war against the British, none was more difficult to reach consensus on than the thorny issue of decommissioning, which had been central to the acceptance of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998.²⁷² There were a host of historical, ideological, tactical, and strategic reasons that made decommissioning such a difficult concept for the PIRA to reach an agreement on.²⁷³ The agreement, which unambiguously called for “the total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations,” led to the

²⁷² The Good Friday Agreement is sometimes referred to as the Belfast Agreement. Full text available in Michael Cox, Adrian Guelke, and Fiona Stephen, *A Farewell to Arms? Beyond the Good Friday Agreement*, 2nd ed., Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006, p.459.

²⁷³ Kirsten E. Schulze and M.L.R. Smith, “Decommissioning and Paramilitary Strategy in Northern Ireland: A Problem Compared,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.23, Iss.4, 2000.

establishment of an independent arms body as a verification mechanism.²⁷⁴ Due to PIRA intransigence and repeated setbacks along the way, including several government shutdowns, it would take years for this body to begin its work.

To the hardliners in the group, decommissioning was an admission of surrender. Moreover, the PIRA's cache of armaments, equipment, and "other resources" were technically under the control of the group's Quartermaster General, Micky McKevitt, a notorious Irish Republican ideologue. Around the time the Good Friday Agreement was being negotiated, the PIRA still retained a vast arsenal of weaponry, including large quantities of the powerful explosive semtex. If the PIRA destroyed these weapons, it would be impossible to resume the war if the peace process fell apart and violence returned en masse to Northern Ireland.

Two international events eventually led the PIRA to agree that its arms would be put "beyond use." The first incident occurred in August 2001 and involved three PIRA members—James Monaghan, Martin McAuley, and Niall Connolly—arrested in Bogota, Colombia for connections to FARC. The "Bogota Three," as they became known in the press, were allegedly sent to Colombia to "trade IRA military know-how for Colombian cash."²⁷⁵ One month later, Al-Qaida attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, eliminating any grey area that may have blurred the line between terrorist and freedom fighter. Terrorism was now a binary label: the PIRA was either a terrorist group or it wasn't. According to English, "there was, after those attacks on America, a measure of pressure from American sources for the PIRA to

²⁷⁴ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.325.

²⁷⁵ Moloney, *A Secret History*, p.487.

decommission; and in the period after 11 September and the Colombian episode, the US State Department called for the IRA ‘to just totally dissociate itself from any terrorist activity.’”²⁷⁶

2.4.6 Why did the PIRA Negotiate?

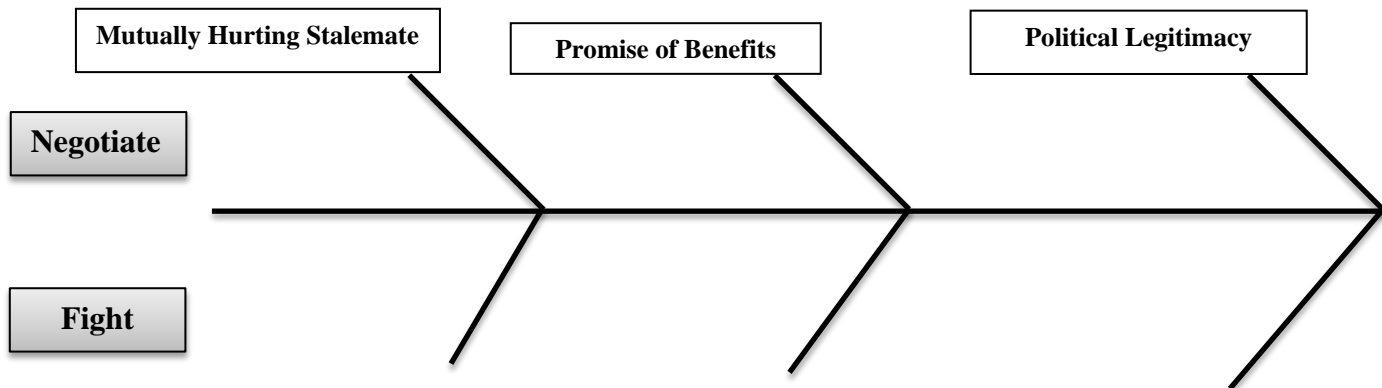


Figure 7: PIRA Negotiation Factors

In 1998, the insurgency in Northern Ireland officially came to an end with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. This historical agreement was the culmination of thirty years of conflict in Northern Ireland. Thirteen years after the signing of this historic peace deal, all parties to the conflict have remained focused on politics as a lasting peace has settled in throughout the country, pockmarked with only episodic acts of violence practiced by fringe groups and criminals.²⁷⁷ The Provisional Irish Republican Army laid down its arms and stepped

²⁷⁶ English, *Armed Struggle*, p.333.

²⁷⁷ See John Horgan and John F. Morrison, “Here to Stay? The Rising Threat of Violent Dissident Republicanism in Northern Ireland,” *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 23:4, pp.642-669, 2011; see also, Martyn Frampton, “The Return of the Militants,” *Violent Dissident Republicanism*, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence,” 2010.

aside for Sinn Fein, completing a process that had begun years earlier. *So why did the Provisional Irish Republican Army negotiate?* To answer this question, one must begin by examining changes in the group's operational tools, organizational tools, and an assessment of its intentions.

By the late 1980s/early 1990s, the operational tools most important to PIRA success on the battlefield had all been blunted to one degree or another. Both the American and Irish governments cracked down on allowing PIRA insurgents to use their countries as a safe haven. Insurgent freedom of movement in the US and the Republic of Ireland were severely constrained. With a restricted sanctuary, the group could no longer train its members the way it had before, which contributed to shoddy operational execution. Finally, by the latter stages of the conflict, Irish America had been persuaded to cease funding the hardline elements of the group bent on continued violence. Manpower and resources were now almost completely shifted to Sinn Fein, and those who wanted to be seen as supporting the 'good fight' would follow suit.

In addition to diminished operational ability, the PIRA's organizational structure was rotting from the inside out. Its ranks had been infiltrated by MI5, the Special Branch, and the Force Research Unit (FRU) of the British Army. Operations were aborted on a regular basis. Informers existed at the highest levels of the group. Essentially, the PIRA's command and control network was compromised. The composition of the PIRA had changed dramatically as well. Politically-minded leaders like Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness now had tight control over the Army Council. As discussed above, the decision in 1986 to reverse the organization's long-standing policy of abstentionism caused a split that led Ruairi O' Bradaigh and other ideologues to leave the group and form RSF and CIRA. Throughout the rest of the 1980s and beginning with the 1994 cease-fire, other militant leaders within the PIRA—

Quartermaster General Micky McKevitt, Seamus McGrane, and Liam Campbell foremost among them— became increasingly concerned that the Adams-McGuinness partnership would abandon violence and accept a political solution.

Between 1987 and 1988, the PIRA lost 26 Volunteers violently and killed 27 civilians they didn't mean to kill. According to English, this two year span in the late 1980s "reinforced the growing sense of the futility of the campaign in terms of what they [the PIRA] had honestly believed it would achieve."²⁷⁸ There was also a general feeling of war weariness among Northern Ireland's population. The PIRA had never been supported by a majority of Northern Ireland's Catholics. That honor was bestowed upon John Hume's SDLP. And there was also a feeling that Irish America was out of touch with the realities on the ground. It was all fine and good to write checks when you were living the high life in Boston, New York, and Washington D.C. But the daily reality for Catholics in Belfast and Derry was death, misery, economic hardship, and military occupation. The tides of public opinion had shifted.

Tracing the PIRA's intentions over the course of the insurgency also provides clues to why the group negotiated. By the late 1980s, the conflict had reached a mutually hurting stalemate. The PIRA, Loyalist paramilitary groups, and the British military—the three primary belligerents in the conflict—each came to recognize that no side held a discernible advantage. On the political front, the British were able to endure 100 deaths a year in perpetuity. Successive British governments felt comfortable with this number. Following Operation Motorman in 1972, when the death toll was above 500, violence never again reached a level that created enough pressure on the British government, at least in strategic terms, to radically reconsider its

²⁷⁸ Interview with Richard English, November 2, 2011.

stance.²⁷⁹ The conflict was locked in a military stalemate from the mid-1970s until its end in 1998. Following 1972, the violence never again reached civil-war like proportions.

The “dirty war” is recalled for the brutality and cunning involved on both sides and has come to be epitomized by the *Stakeknife* affair.²⁸⁰ The *Eksund* had been captured in 1987 and PIRA morale was at its lowest level since its apex following the Hunger Strikes in 1981. The PIRA’s emphasis on professionalization and training and indeed its high learning curve in the area of bomb-making were important factors that allowed it to remain competitive with British forces on the battlefield. Provo insurgents always prided themselves on the ability to maintain a high ops-tempo.²⁸¹ With this no longer the case, many fighters were left dejected and wondering if the group would ever return to its previous glory.

The recognition of a MHS by all sides, but most importantly by the PIRA, is directly related to the another reason why the group transitioned to the political realm. Just around the time the PIRA recognized that it could not achieve its goal through military force alone, the group also matured politically. As PIRA violence ebbed, Sinn Fein’s electoral success flowed. An inverse relationship existed between PIRA violence, especially as the civilian death toll rose, and Sinn Fein’s ability to win votes. The Republicans’ constituency was tired of the violence and demonstrated this at the polls. By the 1990s, the political element of the PIRA’s organization had become more than just an “add-on” to armed struggle.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Interview with Peter Neumann, November 4, 2011.

²⁸⁰ For more on *Stakenife*, see Teague, “From Belfast With Love.” See also, Jon Moran, “Evaluating Special Branch and the Use of Informant Intelligence in Northern Ireland,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.25, No.1, February 2010, pp.1-23 and M. Ingram and G. Harkin, *Stakeknife: Britain’s Secret Agents in Northern Ireland*, Dublin: O’Brien, 2004.

²⁸¹ Interview with Brian Jackson, Washington D.C., December 9, 2011.

²⁸² Interview with Peter Neumann, November 4, 2011.

A dynamic developed that favored less involvement in violence and brought greater results at the polls. Even within hard-line PIRA factions, it was hard to deny the positive things that political involvement was reaping. A kind of momentum developed, which brought about a resource shift from the PIRA to Sinn Fein. After all, to organize, stand for, and win elections, Sinn Fein needed to build a robust infrastructure. Siphoning money and energy toward the armed struggle, with its negligible return on investment, began to make less and less sense. With electoral success came increased legitimacy. Each bombing was now met with a loss in popular support. Adams had initially sold the ideologues in the organization on the notion that politics were a mere smokescreen and negotiations were nothing more than a ruse to expose the Brits' lack of commitment to the process. But by the mid-1990s the political dynamics on all sides had changed. With the support of the United States, and a President in Bill Clinton who "leaned toward green rather than the orange," Adams had developed undeniable clout for the PIRA on the international stage and had achieved unparalleled traction within the group's upper echelons. With each Canary Wharf bombing, and each Adams' refusal to condemn those types of attack, Adams' credibility as a viable negotiating partner was attenuated.²⁸³

To recap, the Provisional IRA abandoned its historical legacy of armed struggle for three main reasons. First, the group was locked in a military stalemate with the two other belligerents in the conflict, the British Army and Protestant paramilitaries. PIRA operational capabilities were enervated through a deliberate campaign of sabotage and subversion by the COIN force. The insurgents had transformed from the hunters to the hunted. By the 1990s, PIRA attacks were less deliberate and rarely well-orchestrated. The group had come to resemble a wounded animal that lashed out violently in all directions, causing collateral damage and a loss of popular

²⁸³ Interview with Jonathan Stevenson, November 3, 2011.

support. From an organizational perspective, its once vaunted command and control network was crippled, and those in the group who advocated a purely military struggle had been successfully marginalized.

Second, and this is a point often overlooked by scholars, the Provos negotiated because they won much prized concessions as part of the deal. The British government granted amnesty to PIRA leaders and political prisoners. Martin McGuinness, the PIRA's second in command, assumed a leading ministerial position in a devolved government. Moreover, decommissioning was postponed, allowing the PIRA to save face. At this point it is worth reiterating the Clausewitzian maxim that war is politics by other means. Insurgency is nothing more than armed politics. As such, the goal of any insurgent organization is garner recognition and legitimacy in the political sphere, and with the concessions granted as part of the Good Friday Agreement, the PIRA had certainly achieved this.

Third, Adams and his inner circle of leadership negotiated an end to the insurgency because they recognized, correctly, that the momentum of politics had carried to organization to a new phase of the conflict. Years of secret backchannel negotiations with the British government had fundamentally transformed the nature of the conflict and the nature of the PIRA itself. It was no longer PIRA-Sinn Fein, but Sinn Fein-PIRA; and finally, just Sinn Fein.²⁸⁴ Success at the polls minimized any chance of a spoiler problem, and the two main splinter groups that emerged from the conflict, the Continuity IRA and REAL IRA, could be managed.

By opening the political system to the insurgents, the British government was able to end the conflict. With a changed political status quo, the PIRA now had a stake in the political future of its own country. Furthermore, the group would be held accountable, not only to the

²⁸⁴ For an in-depth portrait of Sinn Fein in the mid-to-late 1980s and early 1990s, see Brendan O'Brien, *Long War: The IRA and Sinn Fein, 1985 to Today*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993.

government it was now a part of, but also to its constituency. Failing to deliver would have serious consequences. Allowing the PIRA to transition into politics also drew a clandestine group out into the open and forced it to remain transparent and abide by the same rules and laws that governed the other parties. Finally, by including the insurgents in the government, the British were able to abdicate from the role of third-party guarantor. The future of Northern Ireland, for better or worse, would not be solved by the citizens of Northern Ireland and their respective political representatives and institutions.

Table 1: Provisional IRA Analytic Framework Summary Analysis

<i>Operational Tools</i>	
Training	The PIRA's emphasis on training included a focus on ideology/political indoctrination. To the extent that this affected negotiations, the splintering of the organization into the CIRA in 1986 and the RIRA in 199 threatened the success of negotiations at various points. Overall, though, training was not a major factor.
Sanctuary	In the mid-1980s, both the ROI and the US began clamping down on PIRA insurgents' freedom of movement within their respective territories. This sudden change limited the ability of the insurgents to operate. The result was a realization that the fight would be won or lost in Northern Ireland.
Funding	As Sinn Fein continued to contest and win elections, funding for the PIRA and kinetic operations was gradually shifted to help support the organization's political wing. Once this trend gained critical mass, Sinn Fein grew into 'the senior partner,' solidifying the decision to embrace politics.
<i>Organizational Tools</i>	
Command & Control	While C ² played a relatively minor role in the actual decision to negotiate, the group's structure did ensure that once the decision was accepted, it was highly likely to be implemented and followed by a majority of the members. C ² facilitated consensus and a system of checks and balances.
Group Composition	The composition of the PIRA constituted one of the most significant impediments to negotiating an end to the insurgency. Rather than accept the decision to negotiate, ideologues within the group splintered at two separate points, leading to the creation of the CIRA and RIRA.
Ideology	As an ethno-nationalist group, the PIRA's ideology was an obstacle to the decision to negotiate. From its inception, the PIRA stated its intention to stop at nothing short of a united Ireland, which could only be completed by the reunification of the ROI and the 6 counties of the North.
Popular Support	Over time, a sense of war weariness set in among the population on both sides of the sectarian divide. The popular support for continuing the conflict transformed into pressure to negotiate an end to the war from some of the same constituencies that were ardent supporters throughout.
Propaganda	The PIRA's propaganda machine, once so effective at galvanizing support for continuing the conflict, proved equally adept at smoothing the transition to politics. PIRA publications explained the nuances of policy changes and strategic shifts in an effort to gain support for the peace process.
<i>Strategic Decision Making</i>	
Goals	The PIRA's goals proved to be an obstacle to the decision to negotiate. Since negotiations would not allow the PIRA to achieve its objectives, Adams and his inner circle convinced the skeptics that PIRA goals were still achievable, but would have to be won through politics, not violence.
Seminal Events	The seminal events in the conflict—internment, 'Bloody Sunday,' and the hunger strikes—had the effect of prolonging the conflict and dissuading those who favored negotiation in the earliest stages of the insurgency. Each incident fueled PIRA recruitment and funding and elevated the importance and position of the group's hard-line ideologues.
Previous attempts at conflict resolution	With decades of mistrust and mutual recriminations to overcome, previous attempts at conflict resolution served as the 'baby steps' toward establishing good faith negotiations and honest intentions. Although not necessarily perceived in this light at the time, these failed negotiations familiarized all sides with the other and laid the groundwork for the 1994 cease-fire and 1998 GFA.
Mutually hurting stalemate	The realization of a MHS was a major factor in convincing all parties (the PIRA, the COIN force, and the Protestant paramilitaries) that no side would be able to marshal the resources necessary to escalate to a clear-cut military victory. This placed the impetus on the importance of negotiations.
Decision-making structure & process	The PIRA's decision-making structure and process demonstrated that it was capable of making significant changes in strategy. This reassured the politicians who became intimately involved in the process, including US President Bill Clinton who took a personal interest in resolving the conflict.

3.0 HIZBALLAH: THE PARTY OF GOD

3.1 BRIEF HISTORY/BACKGROUND

Literally translated as “the Party of God,” Hizballah²⁸⁵ was formed in the midst of an internecine civil war that would wreak havoc in Lebanon for fifteen years, ending only in 1990.²⁸⁶ The group emerged from the extremely complex patchwork of ethnic and religious groups in Lebanon and draws its support almost exclusively from the Shia communities in the country’s capital city, Beirut, and its surrounding environs, southern Lebanon, the Bekka Valley and the Hirmil Region.²⁸⁷ Similar to other insurgent movements throughout the Middle East, Hizballah receives support and is influenced by powerful actors in the region, including Syria and Iran, the latter of which was the “principal moving force” behind the group’s creation.²⁸⁸

Much of Hizballah’s early success in building its organization can be traced back to the

²⁸⁵ This particular transliteration—Hizballah—will be used throughout this study. Note that there are other common transliterations including: Hezbollah, Hizbullah, Hezbollah, Hisbollah, and Hizb Allah.

²⁸⁶ For a detailed discussion of the Lebanese civil war, see Dilip Hiro, *Lebanon Fire and Embers: A History of the Lebanese Civil War*, New York: St. Martin Press, 1992; Marwan George Rowayheb, “Political Change and the Outbreak of Civil War: The Case of Lebanon,” *Civil Wars*, Vol.13, No.4, 2011, pp.414-436; and Walid Khalidi, *Conflict and Violence in Lebanon: Confrontation in the Middle East*, Harvard University: Center for International Affairs, 1979.

²⁸⁷ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah: A Short History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007, p.6.

²⁸⁸ Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*, New York: Random House, 2004, p.201.

Afwaj al-Muqawama al-Lubnaniya, also known as the AMAL (an acronym for the Lebanese Resistance Detachments) movement, a Shia militia attached to the populist political movement Harakat al-Mahrumin, or, “the Movement of the Deprived.” Trained by the Palestinian group Fatah, AMAL later came into conflict with Palestinian guerillas fighting in southern Lebanon and decided to participate in the National Salvation Committee.²⁸⁹ This decision was just one of a series of several political miscalculations, which along with accusations of cronyism and corruption, led a significant portion of AMAL’s followers to switch sides and support Hizballah.

3.1.1 Operating Logic

The average insurgency lasts approximately ten years. Over the course of an insurgency, both the insurgents and the counterinsurgents can (and often do) evolve, sometimes radically. Insurgents will occasionally alter their objectives, typically in response to a change in the conditions on the ground or following the transformation of the geopolitical landscape, particularly as it relates to the regional balance of power. Hizballah has waged an on-again, off-again insurgency in southern Lebanon for the past thirty years. In the process, it has established itself as perhaps the world’s most capable terrorist group, to include Al Qaida. But to truly understand Hizballah’s *raison d’etre*, it is necessary to understand the context of the insurgency and how it has changed over three decades.

The main impetus for the formation of Hizballah was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Two former Israeli Prime Ministers—Ehud Barak and Yitzhak Rabin—both back this version of events, that it was Israel’s presence in southern Lebanon that precipitated the

²⁸⁹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.17.

emergence of Hizballah, which when initially founded in 1983, “was less an organization than a cabal” until the mid-1980s.²⁹⁰ In 1983, approximately 1,500 Iranian Revolutionary Guards were dispatched to the Bekaa valley to organize the nascent group and provide it with training.²⁹¹

Israel’s invasion of Lebanon, ostensibly to root out Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) fighters and install a government in Beirut pliable to Jerusalem, morphed into an occupation of southern Lebanon and is commonly cited in Israel as *the* textbook case of mission creep.²⁹² During the first decade of its existence, Hizballah was almost exclusively committed to expelling the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) from Lebanese soil and cast itself as a force determined to end what it believed was the foreign domination of its country by the “neo-imperialist” powers, most notably the Israelis, the French, and the Americans.

When the Israelis unilaterally withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, there was a major discussion within the highest ranks of Hizballah about which way to steer the organization. Would the group turn inward to focus on the Lebanese state and attempt to tackle issues of corruption and domestic politics? Or, would Hizballah maintain its “resistance posture” in Lebanon and the Middle East while presenting itself as the most viable option to defend the Lebanese people? While the group did assume a more direct role in the Lebanese political system, the lion’s share of its efforts was devoted to continuing to wage a campaign of guerilla warfare against the Israelis, even though the IDF had ended its eighteen year occupation.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ *Ibid*, pp.33-34.

²⁹¹ Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born With A Vengeance*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p.20. Eli Berman maintains that Khomeini sent the Revolutionary Guards to Lebanon in 1982, though this seems improbable since Hizballah was not formed until a year later. See Eli Berman, *Radical, Religious, and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009, p.51.

²⁹² Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.71.

²⁹³ *Ibid*, p.90.

Another important change in Hizballah's operating logic following Israel's withdrawal was the group's decision to become more closely involved in supporting various Palestinian groups fighting the Israelis, insisting that as Muslims it is a "holy duty to support the Palestinian people."²⁹⁴ The decision to devote both more attention and resources to Palestinian armed groups was reached following a consultation between Hizballah's leader Hassan Nasrallah and Iran's *rakbar*, Ayatollah 'Ali Khomeini.²⁹⁵ Promoting the Palestinian cause and representing the ideals of the Iranian revolution have always been a part of Hizballah's agenda to some extent, although these themes have been emphasized to varying degrees at times. Following Hizballah's July 2006 war against Israel, the group has sought to present itself as a defender of all Muslims worldwide and has broadened its appeal among both Sunni and Shia Muslims.

3.1.2 Type of Insurgency

Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaida were vaulted to the top of the list of the world's most dangerous terrorist organizations following the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York and Washington. But speaking just days after the deadliest terror attacks ever executed on US soil, former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage declared that "Hizballah may be the A team of terrorists" whereas "Al Qaida is actually the B team."²⁹⁶ Hizballah can be most aptly characterized as an example of a "Global-Local" insurgency, which is a local insurgency (based out of Lebanon) that receives outside support (Syria, Iran) and has the potential to become part of a wider regional or

²⁹⁴ Hassan Nasrallah cited in *as-Sharq al-Awsat*, 29 June 2003.

²⁹⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.90.

²⁹⁶ Daniel Byman, "Should Hizballah Be Next?" *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2003.

global struggle.²⁹⁷

What makes “Global-Local” insurgencies unique (only 5 percent of insurgencies since World War II can be classified as such) is that they are distinct but connected to a common agenda.²⁹⁸ Hizballah maintains its power base in Beirut and southern Lebanon, but is also closely connected to Tehran and to a lesser extent Damascus. Time will tell exactly how close Hizballah’s reach will extend into Iraq. Some scholars have identified the establishment of a “cyclical sharing network” which operates between Iraqi Shia groups, Hizballah, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps *Quds* force.²⁹⁹ While it is no *fait accompli* that the Shia-dominated government in Baghdad will reconcile with Iraq’s erstwhile enemy Iran, rich cultural and theological ties exist between Shia intellectuals in the Iraqi cities of Karbala and Najaf and the Iranian religious scholars in Qom and Tehran.

With a long and complex history, it is not out of the question to imagine the emergence of an increasingly militant “Shia Crescent” to counter Sunni influence throughout the Middle East.³⁰⁰ Hizballah is the rare insurgent organization with domestic clout, regional popularity, and the wherewithal to conduct attacks on an international scale. The group has displayed a

²⁹⁷ David C. Gompert and John Gordon IV, *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2008, p.xxx.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ It is well-known that Hizballah has provided training to Shia militias in Iraq in various insurgent techniques, including IED ambush techniques. Some of this training is done in tandem with advisers from Iran’s IRGC Quds Force. The network functions like this: 1) Iraqi Shia groups hone techniques imparted by Hizballah 2) The groups brief Hizballah and the Quds force about battlefield applications of these techniques 3) Lessons are transferred back to the Quds Force training camps in Iraq. Frederic Wehrey et al., *The Iraq Effect: The Middle East after the Iraq War*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2010, p.152.

³⁰⁰ Both Jordan’s King Abdullah and former longtime Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak were fond of using the term “Shia Crescent” to describe the trend of a more assertive posture among Shia groups across the region following the ouster of Saddam Hussein. Scholars like Fouad Ajami and Vali Nasr have spoken and written on this topic at great length. See <http://www.cfr.org/religion-and-politics/emerging-shia-crescent-symposium-implications-us-policy-middle-east-rush-transcript-federal-news-service-inc/p10866>, last accessed January 21, 2012.

penchant for mobilizing Shia across the region, including in Sunni-dominated states like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain where there is little tolerance for and outright discrimination against Shia Muslims. The Arab Spring has only deepened these divisions. When it comes to Lebanese political maneuvering, Hizballah has been extremely savvy and pragmatic, but lest we forget that elements of the group still remain wedded to the idea of a larger movement yearning to supplant secular rule with Islamist rule in Lebanon and the greater Middle East.³⁰¹

3.1.3 Approach

As with the group's operating logic, Hizballah's approach to insurgency has changed over the past thirty years as it has mastered different tactics and adapted its fighting style to reflect what is known as the composite approach to insurgency. The composite approach is actually several different approaches combined (urban, conspiratorial, military-focused) which the insurgents use at different times depending on the enemy, the terrain, resources available, etc.³⁰² In its early years, Hizballah favored suicide bombings, kidnappings, and hijackings.³⁰³ Over the course of Israel's eighteen year occupation, Hizballah honed the skills and techniques of guerilla warfare, including sniping, ambushes, and psychological operations (PSYOP) to name a few.

The 1994 and 1996 Hizballah attacks against Jewish targets in Argentina may not have been monumental in terms of the death toll, but these incidents really put Hizballah "on the map"

³⁰¹ David C. Gompert and John Gordon IV, *War by Other Means*, p.27.

³⁰² US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24, p.15.

³⁰³ For a cogent discussion of Hizballah's operations and tactics between 1983 and 1988, see Kim Cragin's chapter in Brian A. Jackson et al., *Aptitude for Destruction, Volume 2*. Cragin cleverly divides Hizballah's tactical and operational evolution into three distinct periods, providing a rich level of detail while concentrating on the topic of organizational learning.

with regard to terrorist groups that have demonstrated a proven ability to conduct successful attacks overseas.³⁰⁴ As the organization matured, it adopted a politico-military approach that signals its readiness for an enduring insurgency. With a sophisticated media wing and a robust social services division, Hizballah has transformed into a professional organization. That it is well-equipped and trained by not one but two state sponsors which are relatively influential states in a highly chaotic region only adds another layer of complexity to an already complex group.

3.2 OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Throughout much of its existence, Hizballah has enjoyed state support not only from one regional power, but from two. In the history of insurgencies, this arrangement is rare, and it is one of the main reasons why the group has established itself as a major force in Lebanon. Syria and Iran have provided Hizballah with a wide range of resources, including sanctuary, intelligence, training, organizational aid, financing, and weapons. The Lebanese diaspora communities in Latin America, West Africa, and Southeast Asia have also given Hizballah financial support and a transnational intelligence gathering capability.³⁰⁵ These communities abroad have been linked to organized crime, with funds sent from Ciudad del Este, Abidjan, and Bangkok back to Beirut.

Hizballah is unique because it is such a richly resourced organization. This embarrassment of riches has allowed Hizballah to create an extensive social services network

³⁰⁴ Hizballah, or Saudi Hizballah, was also implicated in the 1996 Khobar Towers attacks, although there is still a debate over the extent to which the group was or was not involved.

³⁰⁵ Interview with Daniel Byman, Bethesda, MD, December 9, 2011.

throughout Lebanon, build a sophisticated political party complete with its own media wing, and maintain an arsenal of high-tech weaponry that affords it the ability to conduct terrorist attacks abroad or stand its own against Israel, the most feared military force in the region. Of all the resources at Hizballah's disposal, three in particular have had the greatest impact on the group and its longevity: training, intelligence, and financing. This section details the importance of each resource, why it was so valuable, and how it changed over time.

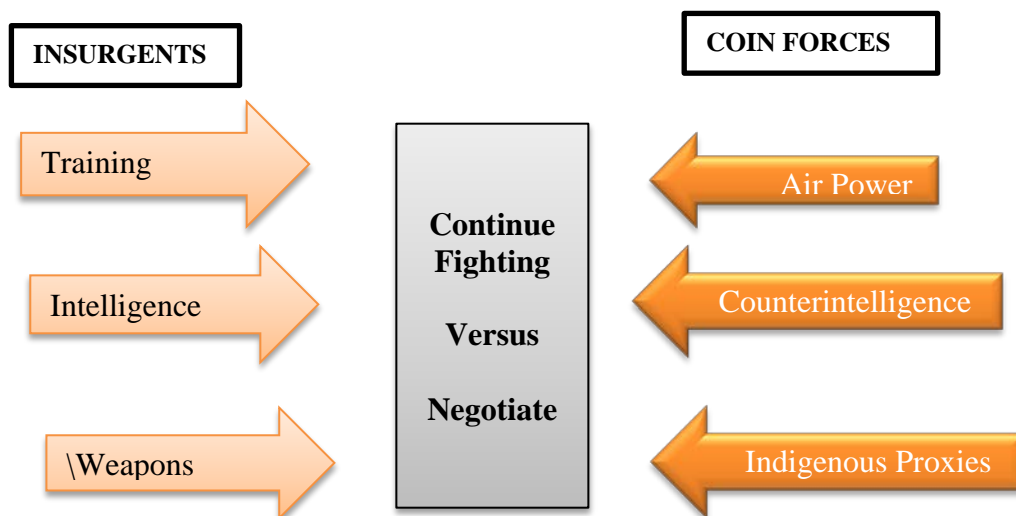


Figure 8: Hizballah Force Field

3.2.1 Training

In its current form, Hizballah is considered a self-sufficient terrorist-insurgent organization that is made even more efficient through Iranian and Syrian support.³⁰⁶ Were this support to disappear overnight, there is little doubt that Hizballah would continue to exist as both a political and military force in Lebanon, although the group would absolutely suffer from the loss of state sponsorship. Iran continues to provide a significant amount of aid to Hizballah. Syrian sponsorship is declining as the regime of Bashar al-Asad struggles to maintain power in the face of continuing challenges to the minority rule of the Alawite sect in Damascus. At the time of this writing, the Assad regime is facing the most serious challenge to its rule since Bashar took control of the country following the death of his father, Hafez.

3.2.1.1 Why was training such a valuable resource?

When it emerged in the early 1980s, Hizballah was nothing more than an inchoate collection of Shia militants that had broken off from similar organization like AMAL and the al-Da'wa party.³⁰⁷ But before this loose group of rebels could develop into something more formidable, it was in dire need of training, direction, and organizational aid. This guidance was provided by the al-Quds (Jerusalem) Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).³⁰⁸ A group of 1500 Guards were dispatched to Lebanon from the Iran-Iraq battlefield following Israel's 1982

³⁰⁶ Hizballah is considered an insurgent group for the purposes of this study because although it still practices acts of terrorism, it also uses a range of other tactics in an effort to control territory.

³⁰⁷ Frederic Wehrey et al, *Dangerous but not Omnipotent: Exploring the Reach and Limitations of Iranian Power in the Middle East*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2009, p.88.

³⁰⁸ The Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) is also known as the *Pasdaran* (Persian for "Guards"). For more information, see Frederic Wehrey et al., *The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps*, Santa Monica, Calif.:RAND Corp., 2009.

invasion to provide materiel support and train Shia militias in areas of recruitment, ideological inculcation, and military training.³⁰⁹ These lessons also included how to conduct effective reconnaissance, gather intelligence, and suicide bombing tactics.³¹⁰ The training provided to Hizballah by the IRGC drastically improved Hizballah's operational capacity, but it also allowed Hizballah to reach a level of expertise where its members could then train other terrorist groups, to include Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ).

Military Prowess

The IRGC contingent sent to train Hizballah's aspiring insurgents trained the militants in a range of guerilla tactics but also taught some members how to properly utilize sophisticated weapons systems, including the BGM-71 TOW missile.³¹¹ In the Bekaa region, twenty Iranian training officers of the IRGC, each a specialist in a different aspect of guerilla warfare, bestowed upon the Hizballah members their knowledge of infiltration techniques, explosives, hit-and-run ambush style tactics, and range of counter-intelligence methods.³¹² These skills allowed the insurgents to wage an effective guerilla campaign against the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) units

³⁰⁹ Magnus Ranstorp, "The Hizballah Training Camps of Lebanon," in James JF Forest, *The Making of a Terrorist, Volume II: Training*, p.244. Of the 1500 IRGC members sent to Lebanon, 800 were deployed in Baalbek and the remaining 700 were spread throughout villages and town in the eastern Bekaa region, mostly in Brital, Nabisheet, and Ba'albek. The Guards headquarters was located in the Syrian border village of Zebdani.

³¹⁰ Cragin and Daly, *Dynamic Threat*, p.68.

³¹¹ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.47. The BGM-71 TOW is a tube-launched, optically tracked and wire-guided anti-tank missile. It is American made and has a maximum range of 3.75 kilometers. According to Cragin, this weapon most likely came to Hizballah from Iran via Damascus and likely included some initial training by the IRGC in how to use the weapon effectively. In an interesting historical twist, Richard Norton has alleged that the TOWS used were originally supplied in the 1980s to Iran by Israel as part of the Iran-Contra deal. See Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol.30, No.1, Autumn 2000, p.30.

³¹² Ranstorp, "Hizballah Training Camps," p.246.

throughout southern Lebanon as well as Israel's proxy force, the South Lebanese Army (SLA).

Hizballah members possess an array of military capabilities and the group's tactics have evolved considerably over time. RAND researcher Kim Cragin divides Hizballah's operational and tactical evolution into three periods, or phases. Phase one was characterized by suicide bombings, kidnapping, and other hostage-taking tactics and lasted from 1983 until 1988. Phase two, from 1989 to 1995, primarily consisted of guerilla warfare; although overseas attacks in Argentina were also a major component of the group's terrorist campaign during these years. Finally, phase three (1996-1999) involved the use of ketusha rockets and kidnapping Israeli soldiers.³¹³ The main point about the training provided by the IRGC is that "Hizballah members did not need to develop their own learning process; lessons were simply handed to them."³¹⁴ This meant that Hizballah's learning curve would not be as steep as it was for other insurgent groups and in effect, the insurgents would not be forced to struggle through difficult setbacks before reaching a high level of efficiency.³¹⁵

Part of the reason why the IRGC's training worked so effectively was because the Iranian trainers and the Hizballah fighters would assess each mission after it was conducted. Studying

³¹³ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, pp.40-47. Ketusha, or "Katyusha" rockets are 122 caliber (mm) surface-to-surface rockets with a maximum range of 20 kilometers, although a newer version of the standard ketusha, the "extended range" ketusha has a maximum range of 35 kilometers. See Figure 1. "Weaponry Used by Hizballah during the July War," in Andrew Exum, "Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #63, December 2006, p.6. For further reading on the threat posed to Israel by Hizballah's rocket capability, see Dennis M. Gormley and Colin P. Clarke, "The Destabilizing Role of Missiles" in Bernd Kubbig and Sven-Erik Fikenscher, eds., *Arms Control and Proliferation in the Middle East: Overcoming the Security Dilemma*, London: Routledge Press, January 2012.

³¹⁴ Ibid, p.47.

³¹⁵ In Chapter Two of their study *The Dynamic Terrorist Threat: An Assessment of Group Motivations and Capabilities in a Changing World*, Kim Cragin and Sara A. Daly construct an assessment framework for evaluating both the intentions and the capabilities of various terrorist and insurgent groups, including Hizballah. According to the capabilities portion of the framework, Hizballah did not follow a linear development and indeed was able to "skip a number of steps" that other insurgents groups suffer through. They credit the training provided by the IRGC as being one of the key factors enabling this rapid development.

after action reports is critical in warfare because when possible, it allows combat units to figure out what went wrong and what went right and then take the steps necessary to fix their mistakes. “Some of the more battle-hardened and seasoned fighters assessed each mission with their Iranian advisers to bolster the degree of surprise and effectiveness in preparation” for the next attack, according to Magnus Ranstorp.³¹⁶ The Iranian-led training camps throughout Lebanon became a “matrix of crucial guidance” and centers of learning that taught tactical agility and innovation.³¹⁷

Recruitment

The Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps dispatched to Lebanon was tasked with the difficult mission of creating something from nothing. The leadership in Tehran sought to cultivate a terrorist proxy that would remain faithful to the tenets of the Islamic Revolution while also serving as a strike force capable of carrying out Iran’s dirty work yet affording the mullahs, who were often several steps removed, the luxury of plausible deniability. Israel’s invasion of Lebanon in 1982 may have provided the impetus for Shia fighters to band together, but benefits helped too. IRGC members organized a comprehensive recruiting drive, which included a monthly stipend and other financial incentives such as subsidized education and no cost medical treatment for fighters and their families.³¹⁸

Imad Mughniyeh, perhaps Hizballah’s most notorious member, is an example of what

³¹⁶ Ranstorp, “Hizballah Training Camps,” p.255.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Malcolm Gladwell would call a ‘Connector,’ who also so happened to possess the versatility of a ‘utility player’ in baseball parlance. A ‘Connector’ knows many people, runs in different circles, and operates without friction across different worlds, subcultures, and niches.³¹⁹ This is part of what made Mugniyeh such a valued asset to Hizballah. He functioned as the go-between among various factions of the organization and its associates. One of his main areas of effort was recruiting Lebanese expatriates abroad and preparing them for terrorist operations inside of Israel.³²⁰ Highly prized recruits included anyone with foreign language skills, a “Western looking appearance,” or a European passport, which would make international travel much less onerous. Much like Al-Qaida does today, Mugniyeh attempted to recruit foreign nationals who had converted Islam and could be thoroughly vetted and indoctrinated by the group. These individuals would be used for myriad purposes, from suicide attacks to auxiliary reconnaissance. According to Ranstorp, Germany was one of Mugniyeh’s favorite recruiting spots. For missions that involved infiltrating Israel, he sought to build a network of Israeli Arabs.³²¹

Ideological Support

From the beginning, Hizballah militants and their Iranian handlers adhered to an ideological worldview stemming from the shared experience of clerical training and religious study in the Shia seminaries of Najaf, Iraq. This ideological fervor encompassed three uncompromising elements, including a belief in Shia Islam, the supreme rule of the *wilayat al-faqih*, and a duty to

³¹⁹ Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*, p.48.

³²⁰ Ranstorp, “Hizballah Training Camps,” p. 254.

³²¹ Ibid, pp.257-259.

practice *jihad*, or struggle in the name of Allah.³²² The main point here is that from day one, Hizballah militants were dogmatic in their devotion to the austere version of Shia Islam being exported by Ayatollah Khomeini and his inner circle. Nevertheless, IRGC units provided the nascent movement with ideological guidance to reinforce these beliefs and urged Hizballah's core membership to adhere to strict Islamic behavior while adopting an "anti-Zionist" platform that still defines the group to this day.³²³ This "ideological indoctrination" was a deliberate campaign aimed at recruiting and training radical Shia throughout the Bekaa valley.³²⁴

"Training the Trainers"

An indirect benefit of the training provided to Hizballah by the IRGC has been Hizballah's ability and willingness to train Palestinian militant groups that also fall within Iran's sphere of influence. It is truly a "win all" situation because Iran furthers its interests by strengthening another enemy of Israel; the Palestinian groups become more adept at numerous terrorist techniques; and Hizballah militants are able to practice their trade and hone their own skills without actually having to engage in conflict. Palestinian militants have trained at Hizballah run military training camps, which operate along 3 month cycles and include instructions on small arms, explosives, intelligence, and counter-surveillance.³²⁵ Hizballah's support to Palestinian terrorist organizations including Hamas, PIJ, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade runs the gamut

³²² Joseph Alagha, *The Shifts in Hizballah's Ideology: Religious Ideology, Political Ideology, and Political Program*, Leiden: Amsterdam University Press, 2006, pp.13-15.

³²³ Ranstorp, "Hizballah Training Camps," p.249.

³²⁴ Ranstorp, *Hizb'Allah in Lebanon*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997, pp.34-35.

³²⁵ Ranstorp, "Hizballah Training Camps," p.259.

from the provision of logistical assistance to training in suicide tactics.³²⁶ Lebanese guerillas training Palestinian militants is an example of terrorist training coming full circle, as it was Palestinian militants under the auspices of Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) that provided Lebanese guerillas with training in the late 1970s.³²⁷

In December 1992, Israel expelled 415 Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas members to southern Lebanon, which merely had the effect of forging even closer ties between each of the groups.³²⁸ The Al-Aqsa Intifada, or the Second Intifada, commenced in September 2000 seemingly in response to then- Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. During the next five years, training and technology exchange between Hizballah and Palestinian groups would follow three general patterns, including direct person-to-person instruction (tacit knowledge transfer), physical technology exchanges, and even attempts by Hizballah members to assume a modicum of operational control over the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, although this final point remains a matter of dispute in the literature.³²⁹ While reports on whether or not Hizballah attempted to seize operational control of specific Palestinian militant groups are contradictory, what is not up for debate is the value added to both Hizballah and Palestinian militants as a result of Hizballah fighters training the Palestinians in a host of guerilla warfare

³²⁶ Cragin et al., *Sharing the Dragon's Teeth*, p.53. According to Ranstorp, Hizballah is credited with introducing suicide bombing as a tactic into the Palestinian theatre.

³²⁷ This observation is made in Cragin and Daly, *Dynamic Threat*, p.49. It also dispels the notion that Sunni and Shia groups will not collaborate because of religious differences. This dynamic also played itself out in Iraq as Shia militants and Sunni insurgents occasionally collaborated to attack American troops and other Coalition forces in Baghdad.

³²⁸ Ranstorp, "Hizballah Training Camps," p.256.

³²⁹ Cragin et al, *Sharing the Dragon's Teeth*, pp.59-66. The physical technology exchanges included Ketusha rockets (both 122mm and 107 mm), AT-3 Sagger missiles, and YM-III Iranian anti-tank missiles.

practices.

International Reach

Conventional wisdom among regular observers of terrorism points to Al-Qaida as the first terrorist organization with a true transnational capability. In reality, Hizballah is the most globally capable organization in terms of both fundraising and operational capacity, having successfully executed attacks in Argentina, France, and Saudi Arabia.³³⁰ A worldwide Lebanese diaspora has allowed Hizballah to extend its network to nearly every continent, with the most prominent diaspora communities located in West Africa and Latin America. After September 11th, the tri-border region where Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina meet was identified as an “ungoverned space” where terrorists lived, trained, plotted, and raised money. The tri-border region, or ‘Triple Frontier,’ is frequently cited as one of the most lawless places on the planet.³³¹ Lesser known areas where Hizballah has established a presence include Uganda, South Africa, and several Southeast Asian countries including Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore.³³² Investigations of the group’s high profile attacks against Israeli and Jewish targets in Argentina in 1994 and 1996 revealed “official Iranian involvement,” to include training and logistical support.³³³ In the case of the attacks in Argentina, Imad Mughniyeh and Iranian Intelligence

³³⁰ While Hizballah’s attacks in Argentina in the mid-1990s are well-publicized, much less is known about a series of bombing in Paris in 1986 and the murky role of “Saudi Hizballah,” which may or may not be connected to the Lebanese Hizballah but in all likelihood is connected to Iran and functions as another spider in the “spider’s web” of the “inner vortex of Iran’s security establishment,” in the words of Ranstorp.

³³¹ Jeffrey Goldberg, “A Reporter at Large: In the Party of God,” Part II, *The New Yorker*, October 28, 2002.

³³² Ranstorp, “Hizballah Training Camps,” p.247. In 1994, Hizballah militants were stopped before they could detonate a bomb at the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand.

³³³ Ibid., pp.246-247.

Minister Ali Fallahian were implicated for their role in helping to coordinate and execute the bombings.³³⁴

3.2.1.2 How did it change over time?

As it continues its transformation from a terrorist group to a politico-military force in Lebanon, Hizballah has relied less and less on training provided by the IRGC. In fact, as will be discussed below, Hizballah not only receives training from Iran but in a case of “training the trainers” it teaches various Palestinian militant groups how to utilize the same techniques for which it once sought guidance. Accordingly, Hizballah members now have the ability to identify new weapons, teach themselves how to use these weapons to best effect through practice in the field, and finally deploy these weapons in battle.³³⁵ In effect, Iranian training made Hizballah more formidable and self-sufficient, as evidenced by the group’s performance against Israel in the July 2006 war.³³⁶

If “practice makes perfect,” than the history of Hizballah as a fighting force offers

³³⁴ Ibid, p.247.

³³⁵ Hizballah’s “learning by doing” approach is evident in its use of the TOW. An article in *The Jerusalem Report* from 2000 described how when Hizballah militants first began using this missile, they would fire it from open spaces, making themselves vulnerable to Israeli counter-attacks. However, they soon moved to the villages, where they could enjoy the cover provided by buildings and civilians living in close proximity. This cover gave the militants the ability to guide the missiles more accurately. See Leslie Susser, “Hizballah Masters the TOW,” *The Jerusalem Report*, March 12, 2000, p.18.

³³⁶ Several important works document the July 2006 battle between Hizballah and Israel although many question why Israel performed so poorly instead of crediting Hizballah. See David E. Johnson, *Military Capabilities for Hybrid War: Insights from the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon and Gaza*, Santa Monica, Calif.:RAND Corp., 2010; Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Air Operations in Israel’s War Against Hezbollah: Learning from Lebanon and Getting it Right in Gaza*, RAND Corp., 2011; Anthony H. Cordesman, *Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War*, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2007.

important clues to why these insurgents fight with such a high level of skill.³³⁷ Just as the British Army had done for the PIRA in Northern Ireland, the IDF gave Hizballah guerillas the opportunity to hone their skills against one of the best militaries in the world, and certainly the best trained and equipped force in the region. As Kenney observes, tacit knowledge is passed along when “veterans and novices communicate, swap stories, and improvise, generating ‘knowledge-in-practice’ through everyday interaction.”³³⁸ Hizballah’s training took place on the battlefield. The effect of this tacit knowledge transfer was evident in the rising number of Israeli and SLA casualties as the conflict progressed.

Israeli counterinsurgent forces and the SLA patrolled southern Lebanon for eighteen years between 1982 and 2000 and Hizballah often clashed with other militant groups within Lebanon, including AMAL and occasionally Palestinian militants operating from refugee camps within Lebanon’s borders. Indeed, as the subtitle of Hala Jaber’s book notes, Hizballah was “born with a vengeance.” Still, Israeli COIN forces are among the best in the world and also benefit from years of continued deployments. Israel has catalogued an extensive list of best practices and lessons learned from its battles against its Arab neighbors as well as both Hizballah and Palestinian insurgents in the West Bank and Gaza.

3.2.2 Intelligence

In an insurgency, intelligence is an essential capability because it allows each side to obtain an understanding of the forces shaping the conflict as well as the nature, objectives, and capabilities

³³⁷ Michael Kenney believes that while “practice may not make perfect, but it does build skills.” See his discussion of *techné* and *metis* in “‘Dumb’ Yet Deadly: Local Knowledge and Poor Tradecraft Among Islamist Militants in Britain and Spain,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.33, Iss.10, 2010, pp.911-915.

³³⁸ Kenney, *From Pablo to Osama*, pp.4-5.

of the adversary. Insurgents rely on intelligence to gather information about the size and composition of the COIN force, the various strengths and weaknesses inherent in its leadership, and a rudimentary understanding about the level of domestic support (on both sides) at any given time for continuing combat operations.³³⁹ Insurgents also rely on intelligence to plan and execute attacks. Intelligence can inform an insurgent group's potential target, the most effective method(s) by which to conduct the attack, and the possible response that the attack will elicit from the COIN forces.³⁴⁰

3.2.2.1 Why was intelligence such a valuable resource?

In Hizballah's ongoing insurgency against Israel, its intelligence network proved to be one of its most valuable assets, especially as the organization evolved over time. In southern Lebanon, the Party of God's popularity with the local population led it to develop an informal intelligence gathering network that complemented its official intelligence apparatus, modeled after the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS). Hizballah's intelligence network was critical to its success against Israel in four main ways: operations security (OPSEC), infiltration and subversion, surveillance and reconnaissance, and psychological operations (PSYOP).

Psychological Operations (PSYOP)

Well aware of the far superior military capabilities of the IDF, Hizballah emphasized psychological operations in strict adherence to Sun Tzu's admonition: "One need not destroy

³³⁹ Byman, *Trends in Outside Support*, p.97.

³⁴⁰ Cragin and Daly, *Dynamic Threat*, pp.50-51

one's enemy. One need only destroy his willingness to engage."³⁴¹ Through meticulous intelligence gathering and a sophisticated PSYOP campaign, Hizballah waged a war of attrition using "persuasion, communication, and the shaping of perception," in addition to a range of guerilla tactics aimed at wearing down the Israelis.³⁴² Starting in 1991, Hizballah's television station *al-Manar* began targeting Israeli public opinion by broadcasting actual battlefield footage that showed Israeli soldiers being killed and maimed. Within five years *Al-Manar* created a 'Hebrew Observation Department' to monitor Israeli radio and television broadcasts around the clock.³⁴³

In a direct attempt to attenuate IDF morale and influence both Israeli government policymakers and the Israeli public, *al-Manar* ran a series titled 'Who is Next?' in reference to the daily segments showing soldiers being killed, while some footage revealed IDF troops retreating from Hizballah attacks.³⁴⁴ Hizballah was completely cognizant of the chord this struck in Israeli society, which prides itself on an image of survival and a strong military tradition. Much of Hizballah's intelligence about its enemy was gleaned through Israel's proxy army, the SLA. About ten years into the conflict, conscripted SLA fighters, nearly three-quarters of the non-leadership of which was Shia, suffered from extremely low morale as they fought their fellow countrymen on behalf of a culturally-alien occupying force.³⁴⁵ Hizballah recognized this

³⁴¹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*.

³⁴² Frederic Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills: Hizballah's Psychological Campaign Against Israel in South Lebanon," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 13(2), 2001, p.54.

³⁴³ Ibid, p.66.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ A.J. Venter, 'South Lebanese Army Combats Internal Disintegration,' *Jane's International Defense Review*, August 1, 1996, p.58.

and took advantage of it, encouraging SLA fighters to abandon their units and using them as “a source of invaluable military, political, and psychological information” in its effort to persuade Israel to withdraw.³⁴⁶ By the late 1990s, SLA field intelligence operatives were selling maps to Hizballah insurgents that detailed IDF positions and routes to navigate minefields, in addition to information about ISF/SLA operations.³⁴⁷

Infiltration as a form of Subversion

Imad Mughniyeh, who served as a bodyguard to Fadlallah and spent his early years with a specialized unit known as Fatah Force 17 directed the bulk of Hizballah’s intelligence responsibilities. Mughniyeh was a major player in Hizballah’s Special Security Apparatus (SSA). The SSA was comprised of the central security apparatus, the preventative security apparatus, and an overseas security apparatus. During his time handling intelligence operatives, Mughniyeh became obsessed with bringing the war to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. This meant finding ways to infiltrate Israel in order to conduct terrorist attacks, to include suicide bombings, on Israeli soil.

A less onerous but still effective tactic was infiltrating the SLA, an extension of Israel’s security apparatus. According to William Rosenau, infiltrating an organ of the state is a form of intelligence collection and derives at least five significant benefits: the opportunity to “plant” misleading or downright false information; the ability to commandeer government funds, weapons, or other military resources; “talent spotting,” which involves singling out the best and the brightest of that particular organ of the state in an effort to sway that individual toward the

³⁴⁶ Ron Schleifer, “Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hizballah versus Israel,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:1, 2006, p.5.

³⁴⁷ Clive Jones, “‘A Reach Greater Than the Grasp’: Israeli Intelligence and the Conflict in South Lebanon, 1990-2000,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.16, Iss.3, p.10.

other side; a general ability to delegitimize the state by the mere claim of infiltration (as the Taliban has done to great effect in Afghanistan) and finally, giving insurgents the ability to assess their adversaries' strengths, weaknesses, and objectives.³⁴⁸ In a manner that would make Lenin proud, Mughniyeh relied on subversion to attack the Israelis from within, sowing seeds of doubt throughout the ranks of the SLA, crippling its ability to operate effectively within Lebanon.

Surveillance and Reconnaissance

As an insurgent force, Hizballah dedicated its intelligence manpower to surveillance and reconnaissance, constantly watching IDF troops and movements, while simultaneously trying to avoid the ubiquitous eye of Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and other high-tech equipment like ground surveillance radar, infrared sensors, and motion detectors. Hizballah also sent militants to conduct auxiliary reconnaissance missions inside Israel in preparation for potential attacks.³⁴⁹

As they have for three decades, Hizballah and the Israeli military trade tit-for-tat attempts to gain the upper hand on the other. The adaptation and counter-adaptation never ends. Mossad and Shin Bet work tirelessly to devise new strategies to protect Israeli citizens, defend the country's borders and airports, and prevent minor skirmishes from escalating into major battles, as in July 2006. And for its part, Hizballah (and Palestinian militants as well) will monitor, study, and adapt. Hizballah is widely known to have developed a robust knowledge of critical

³⁴⁸ Rosenau, "Subversion and Insurgency," pp.6-7.

³⁴⁹ Ranstorp, "Hizballah Training Camps in Lebanon," pp.256-257.

infrastructure targets inside Israel, including a network of gas and electricity installations throughout the country.³⁵⁰ As discussed below, Hizballah's intelligence capabilities have put the group on par with some of the most elite intelligence outfits in the region, and have contributed significantly to the stalemated nature of a constantly simmering insurgency.

Operations Security (OPSEC)

Operations security (OPSEC) is an internal security mechanism that requires a high level of intelligence capabilities to function effectively. The goal is to obfuscate the identities of the individuals and plans for a single or a series of attacks. Iran's MOIS worked with Hizballah's SSA on the most important aspects of operational security. Among these were assisting insurgents with concealing their identity while traveling abroad, procuring a host of critical resources (weapons, fake identity papers, money), and connecting insurgents with various "fixers" who acted as local liaisons.³⁵¹

As the chapter on the PIRA detailed, if COIN force intelligence can infiltrate or 'flip' members of the insurgents' inner circle, it can strike a mighty blow at the resolve of the insurgents. To prevent this, Hizballah has worked to form an "iron-clad security matrix," whose foundation is an encyclopedic collection of materials on all past, present, and new members of the group's internal security branch.³⁵² Rules are enforced by the ruthless Engagement and

³⁵⁰ Ibid, p.260.

³⁵¹ Ibid, p.254.

³⁵² Ibid, p.251.

Coordination Unit, led at one time by Wafic Safa, a participant in the negotiations surrounding several prisoner exchanges with Israel.³⁵³

3.2.2.2 How did it change over time?

Hizballah's intelligence capabilities matured as the insurgency progressed, despite Israel's earnest attempts to defeat the insurgents through military force. Hizballah's ability to innovate on the battlefield is a direct byproduct of its vast and sophisticated intelligence-gathering network.³⁵⁴ With Syrian and Iranian assistance, Hizballah has transformed itself from a poorly-organized militia into a functioning army with the ability to attack with an array of weapons, from plastic explosives to anti-tank missiles. Counterintelligence became one of the organization's strongpoints, as members of its internal security forces grew into experts at identifying and removing infiltrators and ensuring secrecy within the group. In a nod to Israel's SIGINT capabilities, the insurgents eschewed even encrypted phone calls.³⁵⁵ Focusing on subversion and infiltration, the group has at times even utilized Israeli uniforms and ammunition.³⁵⁶ Hizballah's superior training, tactics, and weapons were on display during the summer 2006 battle with Israel. As an Israeli soldier commented during the fighting, "Hizballah is a militia trained like an army and equipped like a state."³⁵⁷

It should be noted that resources play an important role for the counterinsurgents as well.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.51.

³⁵⁵ Byman, "Lebanese Hizballah and Israeli Counterterrorism," p.931.

³⁵⁶ Steven Erlanger and Richard A. Oppel, Jr., "A Disciplined Hezbollah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics, and Weapons," *New York Times*, August 7, 2006.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

One reason why Hizballah has been so effective at countering Israeli attempts to dismantle the organization has less to do with Hizballah and more to do with Israel. Indeed, because Israel has repeatedly responded with force to multiple Palestinian intifadas, it is essentially fighting an ongoing two-front war. Even before the threat of Hamas, the IDF was fighting from a defensive position in southern Lebanon, a position which was fortified following Hizballah's successful escalation-counter escalation in the late 1990s.³⁵⁸ As the United States has learned in Afghanistan once resources were diverted to Iraq beginning in 2003, fighting insurgencies on two fronts devours a significant amount of military manpower making victory in either theater difficult to achieve.

3.2.3 Weapons/Ammunition

Each insurgent group has different requirements for what will sustain the group. Much of this depends on the nature of the adversary, which on the counterinsurgent side of the equation is most often a nation-state. Nation-states have armies and armies have weapons. In many cases, the COIN force has a bigger, better-trained army and deadlier weapons than the insurgents. When one thinks of irregular warfare, the thought that comes to mind is the AK-47 versus the tank column. The flood of the international black market with small arms and light weapons (SALW) following the collapse of the Soviet Union exacerbated civil wars and ethnic conflicts throughout Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus region. In Lebanon, Hizballah relied on resourcefulness and Iranian sponsorship to keep its arsenal current. Besides making Hizballah more lethal, weapons and materiel were a resource that helped sustain the group since the early

³⁵⁸ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.52.

1980s, contributed to their victory over intra-Lebanese rivals, made the group a more versatile threat, and had a major psychological impact on Israel, and to a lesser extent, the United States.

3.2.3.1 Why were weapons/ammunition such a valuable resource?

Attack Capability

Since its inception, Hizballah has relied on a diverse set of tactics in its terrorist repertoire.

Kidnappings, skyjackings, and suicide bombings dominated its early years. Until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Hezbollah was responsible for more American deaths than any other terrorist organization.³⁵⁹ It is unnecessary to detail every major terrorist attack ever conducted by Hizballah in order to demonstrate how valuable weapons and materiel have been to its efforts. Hizballah's reputation speaks for itself. Following its performance in the July 2006 war with Israel, this reputation has been cemented. In his assessment of Hizballah's performance in this battle, Andrew Exum writes, "Hizballah trained on, maintained, and used all of its weapons systems in a skilled and disciplined manner."³⁶⁰ Hizballah's stockpile of Russian made, wire-guided and laser-guided antitank missiles even managed to destroy Israel's most modern tank, the Merkava.³⁶¹

Sustainment/Longevity

Hizballah will celebrate its unofficial thirtieth anniversary in 2012. Planning has much to do

³⁵⁹ Byman, "Hizballah Next?"

³⁶⁰ Andrew Exum, "Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment," The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus #63, December 2006, p.7.

³⁶¹ Steven Erlanger and Richard A. Oppel, "A Disciplined Hizballah Surprises Israel with Its Training, Tactics and Weapons," *The New York Times*, August 7, 2006.

with the group's sustainment and longevity. Beginning in 1996, while the IDF still occupied the security zone, Hizballah guerillas constructed fortifications and bunkers throughout southern Lebanon and placed mines on routes commonly used by Israeli military vehicles.³⁶² More than 500 Hizballah arms caches are thought to exist in southern Lebanon alone.³⁶³ Without the largesse of weapons and materiel shipped into Beirut from Damascus and Tehran, Hizballah might not have "prevailed" in its quest to achieve ascendancy *within* Lebanon itself. The Shia militia was merely one of several armed groups fighting in Lebanon's civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990, and saw numerous actors enter and exit the conflict over its duration.³⁶⁴ In the first two years of the civil war, Shia fighters suffered heavy casualties at the hands of Maronite forces.³⁶⁵ Hizballah's core group of militants remembered being outmatched in the late 1970s and vowed to acquire an arsenal of weapons.

Versatility

The group boasts a diverse armory that allows it to function as a guerilla group or a small-scale conventional army. Besides small arms proficiency, Hizballah is comfortable with explosives—both smaller, improvised explosive devices and large truck bombs. In southern Lebanon, insurgents would detonate homemade claymore mines containing nails and antipersonnel ball

³⁶² Andrew Exum, "Hizballah at War," p.4.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1989.

³⁶⁵ Simon Haddad, "The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.29, No.1, January/February 2006, p.23.

bearings to great effect, a tactic that was adopted by Shia insurgents in Iraq.³⁶⁶ But what makes Hizballah so unique is its remarkable versatility. In addition to what looks like a typical weapon inventory for insurgents, Hizballah has obtained plenty of ‘toys,’ such as global-positioning systems, advanced aircraft analysis and design software, stun guns, nitrogen cutters, naval equipment, ultrasonic dog repelling equipment, and laser range finders.³⁶⁷

Psychological Impact

There can be little doubt that Hizballah’s 1983 suicide bombing had a profound psychological impact on both the United States and France. Following the bombing, the U.S. withdrew its forces from the country. The truck bombing was one of the deadliest terror attacks ever on American forces abroad. While Westerners coming of age in a post-9/11 world have become accustomed to news of suicide attacks in the daily press, in 1983 the use of this tactic was rare.³⁶⁸ Hizballah’s campaign of suicide bombing was linked to its strategy of expelling the Multi-National Force (MNF) from the country.³⁶⁹ In southern Lebanon, Israel was forced to confront an enemy that hid in plain sight and employed asymmetric tactics including hit and run attacks and ambush style raids. The Israelis were fighting in unfamiliar terrain against insurgents who

³⁶⁶ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.49.

³⁶⁷ Thomas M. Sanderson, “Transnational Terror and Organized Crime: Blurring the Lines,” *SAIS Review*, Vol.24, no.1, Winter 2004.

³⁶⁸ Robert Pape notes that while this may not have been the very first modern instance of a suicide attack, it was the most spectacular. Furthermore, Pape credits Hizballah as the model for subsequent groups to use suicide attacks, including the Tamil Tigers, Hamas, and Al Qaida. Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, New York: Random House, 2005, pp.14-15.

³⁶⁹ Daniel Helmer, “Hezbollah’s Employment of Suicide Bombing During the 1980s: The Theological, Political, and Operational Development of a New Tactic,” *Military Review*, July/August 2006, p.75-79.

disguised bombs as rocks, an irregular warfare trend on display today in the slums of Sadr City and the *wadis* of Helmand province.³⁷⁰ These types of attacks sapped the IDF's morale over the years and weakened the leadership's political appeal with Israel's domestic population. In the 2006 battle with Israel, ketusha rockets rained down on northern Israeli towns and villages as Hizballah once again sought to erode the Israeli public's support for continuing the fight.

3.2.3.2 How did it change over time?

Hizballah is arguably the most well-equipped insurgent organization in history. This is part of the reason the Shia militia has been able to go toe-to-toe with the IDF, the most potent military in the region and arguably among the fiercest fighting forces in the world. Over time, Hizballah has acquired weapons from Iran, via Syria, that have transformed it more along the lines of an army than a terrorist group or militia.

While most insurgent groups learn how to use guerilla techniques, not many evolve into forces fully capable of fighting as a conventional military able to master so many different kinds of weapons. In its July 2006 battle with Israel, Hezbollah skillfully employed a bevy of weapons systems, including: small arms (AK-47s, M-16s, and M-4 carbine rifles), short range (0-25 km) surface-to-surface rockets (122 millimeter katyusha), mid- range (>25 km) surface-to-surface rockets ("extended-range katyushas, Fajr-3, Uragan, Fajr-5, Khaibar-1, and Zelzal-2), shore-to-ship missiles (C-701, C-802 Noor), unmanned aerial vehicles (Mirsad-1), and antitank missiles (RPG-29, AT-13 Metsis-M, AT-4 Spigot, AT-3 Sagger, TOW, AT-5 Spandrel, AT-14 Kornet-E).³⁷¹ Most of these weapons were made in Russia, Syria, and China. Mimicking Israel's worst

³⁷⁰ Wehrey, "Clash of Wills," p.62.

³⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.6. From Figure 1, "Weaponry Used by Hezbollah during the July War."

kept secret regarding its nuclear weapons, Hizballah currently maintains a policy of “strategic ambiguity” about its anti-aircraft capabilities, declining to confirm or deny the possession of advanced Scud missiles in its replenished arsenal.³⁷²

3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

During its entire existence, Hizballah has only been led by two individuals—Abbas al Musawi (assassinated by Israel in February 1992) and Hassan Nasrallah. To be fair, Iran retains a generous amount of influence with the Hizballah leadership and the Islamic Republic’s Supreme Leader ‘Ali Khamenei is still revered as Hizballah’s “official” *marji al-taqlid*, or source of emulation. Other highly respected and learned Shia religious scholars including Iraq’s Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Lebanon’s Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah also hold sway within the inner circles of Hizballah. Yet, even as current Hizballah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah settles into his role as an “international celebrity,” and thus muscles his way into gaining more autonomy from Tehran, the Iranian leadership continues to be a major part of the story of Hizballah.³⁷³

³⁷² Thannassis Cambanis, “Stronger Hizballah Emboldened for Fights Ahead,” *New York Times*, October 6, 2010.

³⁷³ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.116.

3.3.1 Command and Control

Hizballah is rare among insurgent groups. It has existed for nearly three decades and can claim between 20,000 to 25,000 supporters, although this number has almost certainly increased since Hizballah's 2006 war against Israel which the Shia group capitalized on to garner legions of support in the Islamic world, including among 'the Arab Street.' Over the course of much of Hizballah's tenure, the group boasted anywhere from 500 to 4,000 members comprising its core fighting force.³⁷⁴ Its military wing is known as *al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*, or the Islamic Resistance. It has evolved from "a loose network of militias" to encompass a political wing, a social services wing, a media wing, a military wing, and a religious wing.³⁷⁵ A truly complex organization—"half political party and half armed militia, part local organization and part international movement"—it has grown in sophistication, professionalism, and lethality.³⁷⁶ In Norton's words, "Hizballah has evolved into a Janus-faced phenomenon."³⁷⁷ To prevent against Israeli targeted assassinations of its top members, Hizballah restructured the group's organizational structure in early 1992. The group layered its leadership, a measure that was deemed necessary following the assassination of Abbas al-Musawi and his family in the southern Lebanese village of Jibshit in February 1992.³⁷⁸

Politically, the group is designed more like a vertical organization. The highest level is

³⁷⁴ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.38.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, p.43.

³⁷⁶ "Hizbollah: Rebel without a Cause?" International Crisis Group Middle East Briefing Paper, 30 July 2003, p.1.

³⁷⁷ Augustus Richard Norton, *Hizballah of Lebanon: Extremist Ideals vs. Mundane Politics*, Council on Foreign Relations, 1999, p.20.

³⁷⁸ Magnus Ranstorp, "Hizballah's Future?" *Jane's Intelligence Review*, February 1, 1995.

the *majlis al-shura*, or Consultative Council, which is comprised of seventeen clerics who maintain close ties with Iran.³⁷⁹ In turn, the *majlis al-shura* select Hizballah's operational leadership, which consists of the secretary-general, his deputy, and five of the nine members of the *Shura al-Tanfiz* (Executive Committee), which is different from the fifteen member Politburo.³⁸⁰ The Politburo is the main supervisory body of the organization, responsible for coordinating party committees devoted to security, social services, and religious activities.³⁸¹ Under these bodies are the three regional commands, as well as Military Affairs, Social Affairs, and the Trade Union. The Hizballah hierarchy is discussed at greater length in the section on decision-making.

In stark contrast to its political wing, Hizballah's military wing functions horizontally, with squads of seven to ten men. Squads use an elaborate system of communication and operate with a high degree of tactical autonomy.³⁸² The command and control structure includes "fighting clerics" who derive authority from the *Shura* Council, linking back to Iran.³⁸³ While the clerics may derive their authority from the *Shura* Council, they are not a part of it (nor are they part of the Politburo) and thus do not hold political positions within the group. Yet these "fighting clerics" are highly trained in insurgent warfare tactics and communicate within the organization.³⁸⁴ Referring to the July 2006 battle with Israel, Exum observes, "Hizballah's

³⁷⁹ *Majlis al-shura* means consultative council.

³⁸⁰ Harik, *Hizballah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, p.54.

³⁸¹ Sami G. Hajjar, "Hizballah: Terrorism, National Liberation, or Menace?" United States Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), August 2002, p.10.

³⁸² Hizballah's military wing is also referred to as "The Resistance."

³⁸³ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.53.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

tactical leaders not only were given the freedom to make quick decisions on the battlefield but did so with a degree of competence that rivaled their opposite numbers in the IDF.”³⁸⁵

Hizballah maintains an active media arm, Al-Manar television station, which is available to televisions throughout the world on satellite.³⁸⁶ Al-Manar was instrumental in providing a Shia-Lebanese perspective of the 2006 war with Israel, as the “Qana massacre” received considerably more attention on Al-Manar than on most mainstream media outlets. In March 2006, The US Treasury Department designated the al-Manar television operation, al Nour Radio, and the Lebanese Media Group (the parent company to both al-Manar and al Nour Radio), as specially designated global terrorist entities. Stuart Levey, Under Secretary of the US Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, proclaimed that, “Any entity maintained by a terrorist group – whether masquerading as a charity, a business, or a media outlet – is as culpable as the terrorist group itself.”³⁸⁷ In addition to supporting Hizballah, Al-Manar has also aided the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. The State Department placed al Manar on the Terrorist Exclusion List back in December 2004, in effect barring individuals who engage in a range of actions involving Al-Manar from entering the United States.

Clandestine groups are by their very nature secretive. However, much is known about how Hizballah has structured its organization and how, with Iranian assistance, this organization has evolved over the years. Perhaps no institution is more familiar with the group’s ability to adapt than the IDF which has seen just how effective Hizballah’s organizational structure has been on the battlefield. Referring to the group’s organizational structure, Cragin proclaims, “the

³⁸⁵ Exum, “Hizballah: A Military Assessment,” p.5.

³⁸⁶ Al-Manar operates as a part of Hizballah’s Information Department, which is also responsible for radio and newspaper sections, in addition to television.

³⁸⁷ Cliff Kincaid, “Bombing Terror Television,” *Accuracy in Media*, August 4, 2006.

parallel (but separate) religious, political, and military structures in Hizballah—from the very top to the very bottom of the organization—have made it easier for the group to translate strategic decisions into tactical practice.”³⁸⁸

3.3.2 Group Composition

Unraveling the web of influence in Lebanese Hizballah is not a straightforward process. Due to the extent of Iranian influence, it is difficult to identify whether it is Iranian mullahs who wield the most power, organic Lebanese Hizballah party members, or revered Shia clerics from Iraq whose directives guide the course of the organization. Moreover, the legitimacy of different individuals has ebbed and flowed over the group’s thirty year existence. The grassroots appeal of Hizballah in Lebanese society has paved the way for “disproportionate weight in the party’s decision-making process to members of the leadership who hold harder-line views on both social and political matters.”³⁸⁹ While certain leaders hold more austere views than others, Muhammad Ra’id, the head of Hizballah’s Political Council and a member of the group’s Decision-Making Council, believes that Hizballah members are best classified “along a non-ideological continuum ranging from ‘flexibility and realism’ to ‘less flexibility and less realism.’”³⁹⁰ This section provides a thorough background on Hizballah’s most important decision-makers, highlighting the various roles played by each, and documents the specific roles these individuals have played in making Hizballah the group it is today.

³⁸⁸ Cragin, *Aptitude for Destruction Volume 2*, p.53.

³⁸⁹ International Crisis Group, “Rebel without a Cause,” p.2.

³⁹⁰ Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu’llah: Politics and Religion*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p. 43.

3.3.2.1 Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah

Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah was born in the city of Najaf in 1935 where he studied and trained under Ayatollah Abu Al-Qasim al-Musawi al-Kho'i, an Iraqi cleric well-known for his apolitical devotion to Islamic scholarship and jurisprudence.³⁹¹ Under the guidance of al-Kho'i, Fadlallah co-founded the Iraqi Da'wa party in the 1960s.³⁹² Fadlallah moved to Beirut in 1966 where he preached the doctrine of an Islamic state in Lebanon nearly thirteen years before Iran's revolution in 1979.³⁹³ In 1982, he would become known as the cleric and poet credited with helping form Hizballah.³⁹⁴ However, his precise role has been widely debated by scholars and "Lebanon watchers" over the years.

The lack of clarity on Fadlallah's role has led to an air of mystery and mischief and to this day he is the most controversial figure associated with the group. His association with Hizballah is often debated and sometimes denied, but many scholars agree that he is the spiritual leader of Hizballah.³⁹⁵ In fact, after the disappearance of Musa al-Sadr, Fadlallah became the most influential cleric in all of Lebanon.³⁹⁶ As Jaber notes, [Fadlallah] "has on many occasions openly identified with Hizballah, but he has also opposed their position." Nevertheless, Jaber adds, he has served as "a strong source of inspiration," even if he holds no official title or

³⁹¹ Martin Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizballah," in Walter Reich, ed., *Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, p.139.

³⁹² International Crisis Group, "Rebel without a Cause," p.12.

³⁹³ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.67.

³⁹⁴ Jeffrey Goldberg, "A Reporter at Large: In the Party of God," Part I, *The New Yorker*, October 14, 2002.

³⁹⁵ Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, New York: Norton & Co., 2006, p.114. Nasr is one of several scholars who refer to Fadlallah as Hizballah's spiritual guide although Norton believes that this characterization is incorrect. For further elaboration, see Norton, pp.118-119.

³⁹⁶ Amal Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion*, London: Pluto Press, 2002, p.13.

considers himself as independent from the organization.³⁹⁷ Wehrey et al. settles the debate between Ranstorp and Saad Ghorayeb distinctly, declaring “Regardless of whether or not Fadlallah has a direct relationship with Hizballah, most experts agree that his beliefs have made an impact on the organization.”³⁹⁸ This much is beyond dispute.

His inspiration is reflected in the diverse views he holds on a range of subjects, including the use of violence, the Palestinian cause, Iranian influence, and participation in electoral politics. Over the years, these views have caused Fadlallah’s relationship with Hizballah to grow both “strained” and “tense,” although it still remains civil.³⁹⁹ What is undeniable is that because of his position as one of the most respected clerics in all of Shia Islam, Fadlallah has exerted a significant amount of influence on Hizballah’s politics over the years.

Fadlallah’s views on violence have matured considerably since Hizballah’s founding in 1982. Initially, the cleric urged Lebanese and Muslims worldwide to resist the yoke of imperialism “by all available means,” to include violence.⁴⁰⁰ Israeli aggression must be met with aggression, argued Fadlallah, who called for war against the Israeli occupation and was responsible for organizing a nationwide strike on May 17, 1983, the day that a treaty was signed between Israel and Lebanon.⁴⁰¹ Although Fadlallah reportedly endorsed and provided justification for the suicide attacks in 1983, he then subsequently retracted this support.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁷ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.67.

³⁹⁸ Wehrey et al., *Dangerous not Omnipotent*, p.88.

³⁹⁹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.118.

⁴⁰⁰ Kramer, <http://www.martinkramer.org/sandbox/reader/archives/oracle-of-hizbullah-sayyid-muhammad-husayn-fadlallah/>

⁴⁰¹ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.69.

⁴⁰² Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but not Omnipotent*, p.92

Fadlallah's role in inciting Hizballah to violence was deemed as so integral that he became the target of an assassination attempt carried out by CIA-trained Lebanese agents.⁴⁰³ The attempt was a joint US-Saudi operation that ultimately failed, although the car bomb used in the attempt did succeed in killing eighty-five people and maiming an additional 200. To preempt a retaliatory attack, the Saudis reportedly paid Fadlallah two million dollars to be used for humanitarian aid among the Shia slums of southern Beirut.⁴⁰⁴ But over the years, and especially following Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 1982, Fadlallah has preached the ballot over the bomb and has at times publicly castigated Hizballah for its resort to the use of arms.

One of the most common descriptions of Fadlallah portray him as pragmatic and open minded, a rarity among Islamic clerics or religious leaders writ large, who often espouse views deemed dogmatic and rigid. Going against the grain, Fadlallah had argued for political participation since the mid-1980s, a position that was widely unpopular at the time, especially among Hizballah's more militant hard-liners. Believing that Lebanon's diverse demographics made Islamic rule in a purely Islamic state impossible, Fadlallah urged Hizballah's leadership to concentrate on what was achievable, namely, progress through politics. His position did not advocate an immediate about-face, but on the contrary, he insisted on a process of gradual reform.⁴⁰⁵ For Fadlallah, an Islamic state is a long-term goal that cannot be achieved "solely through intimidation and violence," but rather through "a campaign of persuasion."⁴⁰⁶ It is this view, among several others, that has placed him at odds with the leadership in Tehran, which

⁴⁰³ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.69.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.99.

⁴⁰⁶ Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizballah," p.138.

advocates a more aggressive and direct route to achieving an Islamic state in Lebanon based on the path of Iran's Islamic revolution.

Like his relationship with Hizballah, and largely because of it, Fadlallah's relationship with Iran is complicated. On the whole, Fadlallah almost certainly has more in common with Iran's Supreme leader than he has differences. Both Fadlallah and Khomeini support the Palestinians, rail against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and both have advocated the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon. However, Fadlallah and the Iranian leadership should not be viewed as one in the same. Unlike Hizballah, Fadlallah does not recognize Iran's Supreme leader as his *Wali al-Faqih*, or religious exemplar.⁴⁰⁷ Instead, Fadlallah took Sayyed Al-Khouii, an Iraqi theologian, as his *faqih* while looking to Tehran on certain political matters.⁴⁰⁸ In an interview with the International Crisis Group, Fadlallah stated that in regards to religious authority, "Iran has no privileged position."⁴⁰⁹ When push comes to shove, Fadlallah's agenda remains a Lebanese one first and foremost while Khomeini clearly follows an Iranian design.

3.3.2.2 Sayeed Hassan Nasrallah

Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah was born on August 31, 1960, the first of nine children born to a poor produce salesman named Abdel-Karim Nasrallah.⁴¹⁰ Hassan grew up and attended school in the Lebanese village of Bazuriya before finishing his formal education in Tyre. After joining

⁴⁰⁷ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.70.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ International Crisis Group, "Rebel without a Cause," p.13.

⁴¹⁰ Nicholas Noe, ed., *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, p.2.

AMAL as a fifteen year old, largely due to the influence of his brother Hussein, Hassan traveled to Najaf in Iraq to study under Baqr al-Sadr at one of the most famous Shia seminaries in the world. While in Najaf, Nasrallah would meet his protégé and mentor, Abbas Musawi, who went on to establish a religious seminary in Baalbak where he instilled in Nasrallah a “revolutionary fervor” and “commitment to change” society which he still symbolizes to this day.⁴¹¹ When AMAL split in 1982, Nasrallah joined Musawi and other members who sought to Islamicize the movement and eventually became a founding member of Hizballah, taking his place on the Shura Council.⁴¹² From 1987 to 1990, Nasrallah fought as a mobilization officer in the Biqaa Valley, where Hizballah battled AMAL and successfully achieved dominance as the most capable defender of Shia interests in Lebanon.⁴¹³

By 1992 Nasrallah was elected secretary-general of Hizballah and has since become not only the most recognizable face of the group, but among the most influential and prominent Islamic leaders in the entire Middle East. What he lacks in religious credentials he has made up for as a fighter and a gifted orator. As secretary-general of Hizballah, Nasrallah has been described as “an extraordinarily shrewd leader” who has sacrificed greatly for Hizballah, to include losing his oldest son in a battle with the IDF.⁴¹⁴ Other caricatures of Nasrallah depict him as an “ingenious marketer” who “makes smart decisions” and holds an “almost erotic appeal” for his many followers throughout the region.⁴¹⁵ Over time, Nasrallah has become more

⁴¹¹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.31.

⁴¹² Noe, *Voice of Hezbollah*, p.5.

⁴¹³ Magnus Ranstorp, “The Strategy and Tactics of Hizballah’s Current ‘Lebanonization Process’” *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.3, No.1, Summer 1998, p.121.

⁴¹⁴ Joe Klein, “The Hizballah Project,” *New York Times*, September 30, 2010.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

pragmatic while demonstrating an uncanny ability to balance a dual strategy of compromise and defiance. To be sure, it is these two qualities, embodied as politics and resistance that make Hizballah unique among insurgent groups as both “a political and military powerhouse.”⁴¹⁶ Nasrallah is credited with guiding Hizballah’s ideological shift over the years, which has been marked by “flexibility and adaptability,” effectively allowing the group to “expand its base of support and sink deeper roots into Lebanese society.”⁴¹⁷

Hassan Nasrallah ascended to the leadership of Hizballah just around the same time the group was about to take its most serious step into the political arena. “Under Nasrallah’s leadership, Hizballah continues to pursue a strategy of pragmatism, accommodation, and engagement in the Lebanese political system,” remarks Hajjar.⁴¹⁸ Richard Norton dubs this balancing act, “walking between raindrops.”⁴¹⁹ Hizballah expert Magnus Ranstorp has closely followed Nasrallah’s ideological evolution during his tenure as secretary general and believes that Hizballah’s “Lebanonization process” has been a major factor in the pragmatism characterizing this transformation.⁴²⁰ Among the major changes that Hizballah has undergone while under Nasrallah’s tutelage are a tighter relationship with the Asad regime in Syria and occasional cooperation with erstwhile rival AMAL. But even though Nasrallah has softened many of his “hard-line views,” his reign has also overseen an increase in ‘resistance’ activities

⁴¹⁶ Noe, *Voice of Hezbollah*, p.1.

⁴¹⁷ Wehrey, “Clash of Wills,” p.55.

⁴¹⁸ Hajjar, “Hizballah: Terrorism, National Liberation, or Menace?” p.16.

⁴¹⁹ Richard Norton, “Walking Between Raindrops: Hizballah in Lebanon,” *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.3, No.1, Summer 1998.

⁴²⁰ Ranstorp, “‘Lebanonization’ Process,” p.121.

directed against Israel.⁴²¹

From his earliest days, Nasrallah has been a consistent advocate of attacking Israel. This resistance has included capturing Israeli soldiers, launching so-called “martyrdom operations,” continuing to pursue conflict in the Shebaa Farms area of the Golan Heights, and most recently, the July 2006 war against Israel that brought death and destruction to both sides. His undying enmity toward Israel has not softened since one of his earliest public interviews in which he declared that “Our strategy is to build a future for ourselves through confrontation with the Zionist enemy.”⁴²² Despite Nasrallah’s hard-line vis-à-vis Israel, this has not precluded him from adopting a softer stance in regard to Hizballah’s participation in the Lebanese political system. Frederic Wehrey observes, “[a]lthough previously supportive of a more militant, non-participatory role for Hizballah in the late 1980s, Nasrallah came to accept the realities of the Lebanese political system.”⁴²³ It seems that once he was confronted with the nuances of surviving in Lebanon’s complex confessional political system, Nasrallah made the transition from ideologue to radical, much the same way Gerry Adams did as leader of Sinn Fein/PIRA.

Hizballah’s secretary-general has repeatedly stressed that while the group would respond to Lebanon’s domestic concerns with pragmatism and flexibility, its resistance activities “would constitute Hizballah’s non-negotiable priority, potentially in perpetuity.”⁴²⁴ And while Nasrallah’s open defiance has indeed earned him the status of an “international celebrity,” it has also invited a steady stream of criticism from prominent Lebanese voices. Following the July

⁴²¹ Ibid, pp.121-122.

⁴²² Noe, *Voice of Hezbollah*, p.23.

⁴²³ Wehrey, “Clash of Wills,” pp.59-60.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

2006 war against Israel, Gibran Tueni, the publisher of Lebanon's leading newspaper asked: "Who authorized Nasrallah to represent all the Lebanese, to make decisions for them and to embroil them in something they don't want to be embroiled in? Did Nasrallah appoint himself secretary general of the whole Arab world?"⁴²⁵ But although opinion throughout Lebanon and the Arab world may remain divided on the appeal of Hizballah's secretary general, he undeniably remains a symbol of strength, defiance, and resistance to the West, as evidenced by the posters seen throughout the region that bear his image along with other populist leaders like Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadenijad.⁴²⁶

3.3.2.3 Ayatollah Ruholla al-Musavi Khomeini

The legacy of Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Musavi Khomeini still looms large in Hizballah lore. Many of Hizballah's leaders were trained in Najaf, Karbala, and Qum, where they had studied under Khomeini, as well as Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and Muhsin al-Hakim.⁴²⁷ Until his death in 1989, Khomeini was Hizballah's *velayat-e faqih*, or model of emulation. From its inception, Hizballah has subscribed to Khomeini's brand of pan-Islamism which stipulates that Iran and Lebanon are "two indissoluble parts of the same nation."⁴²⁸ The teachings of Khomeini have instilled in Hizballah a staunch anti-Americanism and an aversion to Israel that permeates most of the group's writings and statements to this very day.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979 gave Khomeini the confidence to preach the

⁴²⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah*, pp.117-118.

⁴²⁶ Jerrold Green, *Understanding Iran*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2008, p.120.

⁴²⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.45.

⁴²⁸ Pollack, *Persian Puzzle*, p.200.

benefits of theocratic rule. According to the late Supreme Leader, Iran is an example of how a country can succeed by following Islam and installing a truly Islamic government. For Khomeini, Allah had sent Islam for it to be implemented, and he would see to it that Iran would build the model Islamic state but the Revolution would spread throughout the region, including Lebanon.⁴²⁹ As Barry Rubin notes, Khomeini “had rejected the idea that ‘Islam in the present day is incapable of administering a country.’”⁴³⁰ Hizballah’s founding charter offers an indication of the impact Khomeini has had on the organization. When it was first announced in 1985, the charter maintained that all members “abide by the orders of the single wise and just command currently embodied in the supreme example of Ayatollah Khomeini.”⁴³¹ Still, Khomeini was not above criticism. Following the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, graffiti sprouted up in Lebanon questioning Iran’s leader. A popular phrase spray-painted on walls throughout Beirut was “Why 598 and not 425?” This was a dig at the United Security Council Resolution 598, which ended the eight year war between Iran and Iraq, and UNSCR 425, which called for the restoration of security in south Lebanon, but was still unfulfilled.⁴³²

3.3.3 Ideology

Hizballah’s ideology has been described as “a fiery mix of revolutionary Khomeinism, Shia nationalism, celebration of martyrdom, and militant anti-Zionism, occasionally accompanied by

⁴²⁹ Nasr, *Shia Revival*, p.125.

⁴³⁰ Barry Rubin, *The Tragedy of the Middle East*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.124.

⁴³¹ Wehrey et al., *Dangerous but not Omnipotent*, p.90.

⁴³² Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.44.

crude, neo-fascist anti-Semitism.”⁴³³ Its ideological approach is epitomized by its secretary-general Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, who through his sermons and official statements, offers “ideological ambiguity” and skillfully presents Hizballah’s platform in different ways to different audiences. With the skill of a public relations guru, Nasrallah uses several different contexts, or frames, in delivering Hizballah’s message. His ability to preach in various terms—religious, nationalist, Arab, anti-Israeli—is an effective means to rally supporters to Hizballah’s cause.⁴³⁴ As Norton observes, “ideological currents have shifted dramatically in the last two decades in favor of Hizballah, which offers an ideological vision that many Shia now find persuasive.”⁴³⁵

Not only does the group look to the teachings of the late Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini for inspiration, but many scholars believe that Hizballah is actually more faithful to the legacy of the Islamic Revolution than are most ordinary Iranians themselves. But not all experts agree on Iran’s role in shaping Hizballah’s ideology. For example, As’ad Abu Khalil argues that it is “inaccurate” to describe Hizballah as an Iranian creation and that the group’s ideological platform is the product of the “Islamization” of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and theory.⁴³⁶ Still, even a cursory glance at Hizballah’s founding charter as captured in its 1985 open letter addressed to the “Downtrodden in Lebanon and in the World,” reveals language heavily colored by the Iranian revolution.⁴³⁷ Indeed, Hizballah’s ideological links to Iran have helped shape the

⁴³³ Adam Shatz, “In Search of Hizballah,” *The New York Review of Books*, April 29, 2004.

⁴³⁴ Judith Palmer Harik, *Hizballah: The Changing Face of Terrorism*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2004, p.71.

⁴³⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.17.

⁴³⁶ As’ad AbuKhalil, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.27, No.3, July 1991, pp.390-403.

⁴³⁷ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.35.

group's stance on the nature of conflict, the ideal character of the nation-state, how to relate to other Muslims, and finally, its overall approach to dealing with the West.⁴³⁸

Hizballah's outlook can be considered binary. This ideological partition divides the world between the exploited and the exploiters, or the oppressed (*mustad'afin*) and the oppressors (*mustakbirin*).⁴³⁹ This dichotomy attempts to convey the dualism and millenarianism of the Shia community which views itself as a perpetual underdog in its struggle to achieve equality and justice.⁴⁴⁰ In Hizballah's worldview, oppression takes many forms, including economic, cultural, political and social and transcends both nationality and religion.⁴⁴¹ Central tenets of Hizballah's charter include the obligations to struggle against secularism, injustice, and the oppression of the *ummah* by foreign imperialists, especially America and Israel.⁴⁴² In the words of Nasrallah's deputy Sheikh Na'im Qaseem, "even if hundreds of years should pass by, Israel's existence will continue to be an illegal existence."⁴⁴³ According to Hizballah's ideology, the mere existence of Israel is anathema.⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁸ Hajjar, "Hizballah: Terrorism, National Liberation, or Menace?" p.10.

⁴³⁹ Norton, *Extremist Ideals vs. Mundane Politics*, p.12.

⁴⁴⁰ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah: Politics and Religion*, pp.16-17.

⁴⁴¹ Hajjar, "Hizballah: Terrorism, National Liberation, or Menace?" p.11.

⁴⁴² The *ummah* is the global Muslim community.

⁴⁴³ Shatz, "In Search of Hizballah."

⁴⁴⁴ Norton, *Middle East Policy*, Vol.V, No.4, January 1998, p.152.

3.3.4 Popular Support

Hizballah is a prominent example of an insurgent group that enjoys a significant amount of popular support, both domestically and within the wider Arab and Islamic world. Hizballah's main base of support is located in three general areas: Beirut and its surrounding environs; southern Lebanon; and the Bekaa Valley/Hirmil Region.⁴⁴⁵ While some of the group's prestige is a result of success fighting against Israel's superior military, Hizballah's social services provision earns the group active internal support, which according to the US Army and Marine Corps Field Manual 3-24 (FM 3-24) is "usually the most important form of support to an insurgency."⁴⁴⁶ Still, how can we truly know if Hizballah commands as much popular support as it claims? In Christopher Paul's review of the social science literature on terrorism and insurgency, he concludes "popular support is too often assumed and the processes by which it is generated and maintained not often problematized."⁴⁴⁷ Support for Hizballah in Lebanon is apparent by its role as a major political player in Lebanon, as the group continues to consolidate power.⁴⁴⁸ Anecdotal evidence from newspapers and journal articles suggests that Hizballah is perhaps more popular than ever before.

In an effort to quantify this support, Simon Haddad of Notre Dame University in Jounieh,

⁴⁴⁵ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.6.

⁴⁴⁶ *FM 3-24*, p.105.

⁴⁴⁷ Christopher Paul has researched and written on the existing social science knowledge regarding the connections between popular support and an insurgent group's ability to sustain itself. See "As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships Between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 33, Issue 6, 2010, pp.488-510 and Christopher Paul, "How Do Terrorists Generate and Maintain Support?" in Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin eds., *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2009, pp.113-150.

⁴⁴⁸ Mohamad Bazzi, "Lebanon: Hizballah's Way," *GlobalPost*, August 7, 2010.

Lebanon has conducted comprehensive survey research to unearth the reasons for the group's 'rock 'n roll' like status. Haddad's study concludes that the Party of God is so beloved in the Shia community for its adherence to religious piety and the social aspects of Islam. Furthermore, the majority of respondents polled held positive views toward the growth of the organization and its use of force, while backing Hizballah's refusal to disarm in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559.⁴⁴⁹

Hizballah is the best-organized group operating in Lebanon and retains the broadest base of support of all Shia political parties in the country.⁴⁵⁰ This support is cross-cutting and extends across other ethnic groups. According to a World Public Opinion.org poll conducted in August 2006, support for Hizballah was measured as the following: 96 percent of Shias, 87 percent of Sunnis, 80 percent of Christians, and 80 percent of Druze.⁴⁵¹ These figures would be impossible to imagine during any point of Lebanon's fifteen year civil war. While some of the group's popularity was no doubt a result of its perceived success fighting the Israelis a month prior to the poll, these numbers still indicate that Hizballah's appeal extends beyond Lebanon's Shia community. Hizballah's popularity should come as little surprise. In contrast to other political parties and even the Lebanese state, Hizballah provides a wide range of social services at little or no cost to the community. Hizballah offers a "vast network of womb-to-tomb services" including hospitals, schools, orphanages, and credit programs.⁴⁵² Capacity gaps breed functional

⁴⁴⁹ Simon Haddad, "The Origins of Popular Support for Lebanon's Hizballah," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.29, Issue 1, 2006, pp.21-34.

⁴⁵⁰ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.16.

⁴⁵¹ Alexis G. Grynkeiwich, "Welfare as Warfare: How Violent Non-State Groups Use Social Services to Attack the State," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 31, 2008, p.363.

⁴⁵² Ilene R. Prusher, "Through Charity, Hizballah Charms Lebanon," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 19, 2000.

holes which have hampered the efforts of Lebanon's government to address the needs of its population.⁴⁵³ In the absence of the state's ability to provide for all of its citizens, Hizballah has filled the void and come to the rescue of the oft-neglected Shia community of southern Lebanon.⁴⁵⁴ The Lebanese government has welcomed these efforts in recognition that they are required for domestic stability. Several scholars have found that when an insurgent group is the only provider of goods and services in an area, support for these organizations is higher than in areas where multiple entities supply services.⁴⁵⁵

These programs can be divided between large service providers and smaller, more specifically targeted outreach efforts.⁴⁵⁶ Some of the larger services include Jihad al-Binaa (JAB), or Construction Jihad, and the Islamic Health Committee (IHC), both opened in 1984. Three years later, in 1987, the Relief Committee of Imam Khomenei (RCIK) was opened in the Hrat Hreik section of the southern suburbs around Beirut.⁴⁵⁷ The Relief Committee was responsible for the creation of an employment office as well as the formation of several technical trade institutes, including those open to women.

These services, in addition to many others throughout Lebanon, receive funding from

⁴⁵³ For several interesting historical accounts of the creation of the modern welfare state, see P. Flora and A.J. Heidenheimer, eds., *The Development of the Welfare States in Europe and America*, New Brunswick: 1981; M. Bruce, *The Coming of the Welfare State* (London: Batsford, 1974); and E. Berkowitz and K. McQuaid, *Creating the Welfare State: The Political Economy of the Twentieth Century Reform*, Lawrence, KS: 1988. A brief but clever synopsis of the decline of the state is offered by Martin Van Creveld, "The Fate of the State," *Parameters*, Spring 1996, pp.4-18.

⁴⁵⁴ Martin Kramer, "The Moral Logic of Hizballah," in *Confronting Fear: A History of Terrorism*, edited by I. Cronin, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, pp.282-293.

⁴⁵⁵ S.T. Flanigan, "Charity as Resistance: Connections between Charity, Contentious Politics, and Terror," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29, 2006.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.646-648.

⁴⁵⁷ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.147.

Iran. In the early years, Hizballah reportedly received between five and ten million dollars a month, although Jaber suggests that it is possible that the figures are higher.⁴⁵⁸ The funding has decreased over time, but financing from Iran is still considered a major resource for Hizballah, which uses the money to maintain its ubiquitous social welfare infrastructure. Surely, many Iranians must wonder why their government subsidizes an insurgent group in Lebanon even as Iran's own economy continues to suffer, exacerbated by more restrictive sanctions imposed by the West in response to Tehran's ongoing nuclear ambitions.

3.3.5 Public Relations/Propaganda

Hizballah transmitted the first broadcast of its television station Al-Manar ("The Beacon") in 1991 and began regularly scheduled broadcasts a mere three years later. Al-Manar is also known as *Qanat Al-Moqawama*, or the Station of Resistance and serves a critical function as the main dissemination point for Hizballah news and propaganda. In addition to Al-Manar, Hizballah maintains an extensive media operation that includes Al-Nur Radio, *Al-Intiqad Weekly Journal*, *Baqiatollah Islamic Magazine*, as well as a network of over fifty websites that operate in several languages, including English, French, German, and Arabic.⁴⁵⁹ Al-Manar is not just a Lebanese phenomenon. Rather, its popularity has facilitated its growth into one of the leading news organizations of the Arab world. The station broadcasts worldwide via satellite and runs on an

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, 149-150.

⁴⁵⁹ Gabriel Weimann, "Hizballah Dot Com: Hizballah's Online Campaign," *New Media and Innovative Technologies*, Ben-Gurion University Press, 2008, p.5. See also, A. Jorisch, "Al-Manar: Hizballah TV, 24.7," *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter 2004, pp.17-31.

annual budget of roughly \$15 million.⁴⁶⁰

Insurgency is armed politics, and a large part of politics is disseminating a favorable message to a target audience. Hizballah's propaganda operations are sophisticated enough to allow for a two-pronged approach. The group targets both the "enemy audience" (Israel) and a "neutral audience." The main themes directed toward Israel are Hizballah's unrelenting resolve and determination to continue the fight; the notion that this conflict will be a long struggle; the futility of Israeli aggression; the quagmire of the conflict; the well-defined political aim of Hizballah's cause; and finally, guilt-induced messages geared toward exploiting sympathetic Israelis, both citizens and soldiers alike.⁴⁶¹ To the neutrals, Hizballah's propaganda reinforces the portrait of the Israelis as foreign occupiers intent on sully Islam and occupying Muslim lands. Furthermore, Hizballah attempts to convince neutral audiences that Hizballah alone is the most legitimate entity in Lebanon and the only force capable of regaining Lebanon's sovereignty following decades of war and occupation.

Just as impressive as Hizballah's television and video production is the group's extensive use of new media and information technologies, including its widespread presence on the internet.⁴⁶² Nasrallah has his own personal website, complete with archives of his speeches and a photo gallery divided into various sections, including: military operations, Lebanese brigade, Islamic resistance, Al-Aqsa intifada, attacks, Qana massacre, Mansoura massacre, and "other massacres." On Hizballah-run websites, the term Israel is always placed in quotation marks and

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, p.7. To put Al-Manar's budget in perspective, the PIRA's entire operating budget was \$15 million a year until the 1990s. Horgan, "Playing the Green Card Part I", p.10.

⁴⁶¹ Ron Schleifer, "Psychological Operations: A New Variation on an Age Old Art: Hizballah versus Israel," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 29:1, 2006, pp.11-12.

⁴⁶² For more on Hizballah's all-around technology use, see A.J. Dallal, "Hizballah's Virtual Civil Society," *Television and New Media*, 2:4, pp.367-372, 2001.

Israelis are frequently referred to as Nazis.

The content available on Hizballah's websites is a reflection of the group's diverse agenda and includes: news and information, welfare and social services, religious indoctrination, personal information of Hizballah leaders, anti-Israeli content, bulletin boards, and youth-oriented features.⁴⁶³ Targeting youth is a bald attempt at recruitment. In 2010, to further its effort toward engaging the younger generation, Hizballah developed an online video game application where players wage a war against Hizballah's enemies, mainly the Israelis. Before the game begins, a player takes rounds of target practice against a lineup of well-known Israeli politicians.⁴⁶⁴ The two primary Hizballah-run websites are www.hizbollah.org and www.ghaliboun.net. When Israeli hackers interrupted service on these websites during the July 2006 war, Hizballah's own hackers hijacked communication portals of companies, cable providers, and web-hosting servers in south Texas, suburban Virginia, as well as Delhi, Montreal, Brooklyn, and New Jersey.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶³ Weimann, "Hizballah Dot Com," p.11.

⁴⁶⁴ Elisabeth Ferland, "Hizballah and the Internet," Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 4, 2010.

⁴⁶⁵ Hillary Hylton, "How Hizballah Hijacks the Internet," *Time*, August 8, 2006.

3.4 STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

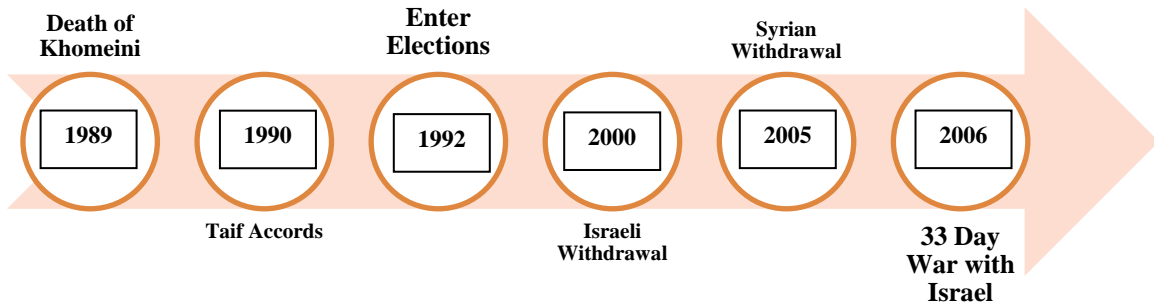


Figure 9: Timeline of Hizballah Seminal Events, Attempts at Conflict Resolution, MHS

3.4.1 Goals/Objectives

The Party of God is a subnational group striving to control territory within Lebanon while retaining an austere Shia Islamist influence to its politics.⁴⁶⁶ Hizballah has several primary objectives, although the group is well aware that some are more quixotic than others. In an ideal world, Hizballah seeks to create a wider Islamic community and to export the Islamic Revolution abroad. Over the years, it has announced its intention to jettison the Israelis from Jerusalem and

⁴⁶⁶ Hizballah's official spokesmen maintains that the movement is a "mission" and a "way of life," unique to Shia Muslims, Ibrahim al-Amin in *al-Harakat al-Islammiyya fi Lubnan*, Beirut: Dar al-Sanin, 1984, pp.145-6.

holds the restoration of the rights of Muslims everywhere as a sacred duty.⁴⁶⁷ But Hizballah's decision to participate in Lebanese parliamentary elections for the first time in 1992 is a clear indication that the group is finally "coming to terms with its socio-political setting."⁴⁶⁸

With Israel's 2000 unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon, Hizballah reached a crossroads. Resisting occupation was at the core of Hizballah's doctrine, as spelled out in its 1985 open letter. Two years prior to Israel's withdrawal, and perhaps in anticipation of it, Nasrallah and Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Na'im Qaseem hinted that the 1985 open letter is now obsolete and that it should no longer be considered as "an authoritative guide to the party's positions."⁴⁶⁹ While the letter did serve its purpose, it was now relegated to the Hizballah archives as a document which "belonged to a certain historical moment that had passed."⁴⁷⁰ Even though the seminal document outlining Hizballah's core beliefs has been downplayed by some of the group's top leaders, the long-term objectives of Hizballah remain the same. It still seeks the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon based on the ideals of the Iranian revolution and the elimination of the State of Israel.⁴⁷¹

If the group's 2006 war with Israel is representative of its continued desire to wage a protracted struggle against Israel, what about the issue of establishing an Islamic state in Lebanon, a country with a mosaic of religions, ideologies, and ethnicities that include Muslims (Shia, Sunni, Druze, Alawite), Christians (Maronites), fundamentalists, moderates, secularists,

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, p.16.

⁴⁶⁸ Norton, "Walking Between Raindrops: Hizballah in Lebanon," *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.3, No.1, Summer 1998, p.93.

⁴⁶⁹ Norton, *Hezbollah*, p.46.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Shatz, "In Search of Hizballah."

communists, Arabs, Armenians, and Palestinians? When asked about his views on an Islamic state in Lebanon, Nasrallah replied: “We believe the requirement for an Islamic state is to have an overwhelming popular desire, and we’re not talking about fifty percent plus one, but a large majority. And this is not available in Lebanon and probably never will be.”⁴⁷² That Nasrallah and the Hizballah leadership grasp this reality is reflected in the group’s political strategy which works within the framework of a multi-sectarian Lebanon.⁴⁷³ Nevertheless, Hizballah believes that it is a religious duty to establish an Islamic state in Lebanon because this is the only form of government suited to achieving justice, equality, and freedom until the return of the divinely anointed Hidden Imam (*Mahdi*).⁴⁷⁴

3.4.2 Seminal Events

3.4.2.1 Death of Khomeini (1989)

The death of Ayatollah Khomeini precipitated what many have called Hizballah’s ‘Lebanonization’ process. The ‘Lebanonization’ process, described at length by numerous scholars but most comprehensively articulated by Magnus Ranstorp, refers to the deliberate decision by powerful players in Iran’s theocracy and Hizballah’s leadership to transform the group from a terrorist organization into a military, political, and social force within Lebanon.⁴⁷⁵

As Wehrey observes, Hizballah’s changing views on participation in the political process began

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu’llah: Politics and Religion*, p.49.

⁴⁷⁴ Hajjar, “Hizballah: Terrorism, National Liberation, or Menace?” p.11. For background information on the concept of the Hidden Imam, see Fouad Ajami, *The Vanished Imam: Musa al-Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986.

⁴⁷⁵ Ranstorp, “‘Lebanonization Process’” *Mediterranean Politics*, Vol.3, No.1, Summer 1998, pp.103-134.

to take shape and “were in large measure linked to broader changes in the clerical leadership of its primary patron and financier, Iran, following the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989.”⁴⁷⁶ Influential members of Hizballah had grown weary of being seen as a stalking horse for Iran and sought to assert a greater degree of autonomy from Tehran, in effect nationalizing the resistance to reflect a Lebanese, not an Iranian agenda.

To replace Khomeini, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ascended to the status of Supreme Leader of Iran and in the process, inherited a wealth of challenges, including an economy in tatters from eight years of continuous war. Commenting on the death of Khomeini, Norton notes, “the charismatic symbol of the revolution was replaced by men of more modest proportions who would now have to address the daunting, if mundane, challenges of post-revolutionary Iran.”⁴⁷⁷ One of these challenges was Iran’s relationship with Hizballah, and its spiritual guide Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah who openly questioned Khamenei’s religious credentials. As discussed earlier, Fadlallah looked toward Iraq, not Iran, for inspiration. Tensions between Iraq and Iran were at an all-time high immediately following the death of Khomeini, who had vowed to pursue the war with Iraq until Saddam Hussein was defeated. Khamenei was elevated to succeed Khomeini mainly due to his popularity with conservative clerics in Iran, but outside Tehran, Khamenei was still an unknown quantity. As such, Fadlallah found more in common with the moderate Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and together, the two “proved instrumental in bringing to power a new cadre of clerics who transformed Hizballah’s political strategy,” and ushered in the era of one of Hizballah’s rising stars, Hassan Nasrallah.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ Wehrey, “Clash of Wills,” p.58.

⁴⁷⁷ Norton, *Mundane Politics*, p.18.

⁴⁷⁸ Wehrey, “Clash of Wills,” p.59.

The death of Khomeini and his replacement by Khomeini as Hizballah's ultimate source of authority touched off a power struggle within Iran over the future direction of the group. Right around the same time as the death of Khomeini and the elevation of Khomeini to Supreme Leader, the emergence of President Rafsanjani signaled the marginalization of the Iranian revolutionist faction and a move toward moderation in both Iran and Lebanon.⁴⁷⁹ Rafsanjani was concerned with rebuilding the Iranian economy and normalizing relations with the Arab world following the eight year war between Iran and Iraq from 1980 to 1988.⁴⁸⁰ In a move that was symbolic of the schism between moderates and conservatives in Iran following the loss of the Islamic Revolution's leader, Rafsanjani deemphasized militant Shia ideology as he recast Iranian foreign policy in more pragmatic terms.⁴⁸¹

Hizballah, for its part, was determined to gain greater independence from Iran in order to depict the group as Lebanese, first and foremost. In certain areas, Hizballah gained the independence it sought but with more autonomy came less funding from its principal sponsor and new pressures to raise money through alternative sources and methods.⁴⁸² Furthermore, even as Rafsanjani loosened the reins in some areas, he tightened them in others by replacing *Pasdaran* units in Lebanon with those more pliable to 'official Iran' and placing his brother, Mahmud Bahramani, in charge of Syrian and Lebanese affairs at the Iranian Ministry of Foreign

⁴⁷⁹ Ranstorp, "'Lebanonization' Process," p.118.

⁴⁸⁰ Hajjar, "Hizballah: Terrorism, National Liberation, or Menace?" p.15.

⁴⁸¹ Wehrey, "Clash of Wills," p.59.

⁴⁸² Matthew Levitt has observed that over the past thirty years, when Iran's financial support of Hizballah ebbs, the group puts more effort on expanding its illicit activities to earn money. See Matthew Levitt, "Hizballah: Party of Fraud," *Foreign Affairs*, July 27, 2011 for more on how Hizballah uses crime to finance its operations. Also see Levitt's forthcoming book, *Hizballah: The Global Footprint of Lebanon's "Party of God."*

Affairs.⁴⁸³

The death of Khomeini, the symbol of Iran's Islamic Revolution, had a major effect on the future direction of Hizballah. Many see this moment as pivotal in changing Hizballah's trajectory by influencing the decision to expand and evolve its portfolio beyond a terrorist group and into a formidable 'hybrid' organization capable of waging war and contesting elections. In the section on decision-making, I detail the machinery and inner-dynamics at work behind Hizballah's official entry into politics during the 1992 parliamentary elections in Lebanon.

3.4.2.2 War with Israel (2006)

Conceptualizing Hizballah as an insurgent group takes some imagination and definitional flexibility. As defined by RAND researcher Martin Libicki's list, the insurgency in Lebanon lasted from 1975 to 1990. Hizballah was merely one faction among many that participated in this insurgency, described by others as closer to a civil war. But one also needs to consider the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon which lasted from 1982 to 2000, a period that saw Hizballah emerge as Israel's primary enemy. Attacks and small skirmishes between the IDF and Hizballah guerillas continued in the years following the Israeli withdrawal in 2000. Hizballah remains armed and a look at the group's rhetoric reveals that its animosity toward its 'Zionist enemy' has not tempered in the least. For practical purposes, until Hizballah disarms and renounces violence, it can be considered to be in a perpetual state of insurgency.

The desire and capability to continue jousting with Israel reached a tipping point in July 2006 when Hizballah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers just over the border. In what has become one of the most studied and analyzed conflicts of the past decade, Hizballah fighters battled the

⁴⁸³ Ranstorp, "'Lebanonization' Process," p.118.

IDF for thirty three days.⁴⁸⁴ By most accounts, Hizballah more than held its own against Israel and perceptions that Hizballah actually “won” the battle have emboldened the group’s leadership and magnified its popularity throughout large portions of the Arab and Islamic world. This perception of victory, real or imagined, has serious implications for the future of Hizballah. If Hizballah had been thoroughly routed by the IDF, as many observers predicted, the group may have been more likely to acquiesce to demands of disarmament and an overwhelming Israeli military victory could have signaled a death knell for one of the world’s most notorious terrorist/insurgent groups.⁴⁸⁵

In his analysis of the conflict, “Hizballah at War: A Military Assessment,” Exum notes that some of the IDF officers he interviewed for his study are convinced that Hizballah is “completely trained by Iran in both its weapons skills and its tactics.”⁴⁸⁶ This view may be outdated and reflects an ongoing debate over exactly how much control Iran still maintains over Hizballah, at least from a purely military perspective. What is clear, however, is that Hizballah has far more *metis* than its Iranian counterparts. *Metis* is the hands on experience gained through

⁴⁸⁴ Some of the best analysis of the conflict include Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hizballah, and the War in Lebanon*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Shlomo Brom and Meir Elran, eds., *The Second Lebanon War: Strategic Perspectives*, Tel Aviv: Institute for National Security Studies, 2007; Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hizballah-Israeli War*, The Long War Series Occasional Paper 26, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008; David E. Johnson, “Military Capabilities for Hybrid War: Insights from the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon and Gaza,” Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2010; Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Air Operations in Israel’s War Against Hizballah: Learning from Lebanon and Getting it Right in Gaza*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2011; and David E. Johnson, *Hard Fighting: Israel in Lebanon and Gaza*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2012.

⁴⁸⁵ This argument is made, rather convincingly, in Nahum Barnea, “Israel vs. Hizballah,” *Foreign Policy*, Nov/Dec 2006, Issue 157, pp.22-27.

⁴⁸⁶ Exum, “Hizballah at War,” p.7.

conducting guerilla activities repeatedly in local settings.⁴⁸⁷ Indeed, as Exum relates, “the fighters of Hizballah have infinitely more combat experience and acquired tactical *nous* than their Iranian sponsors,” leading some to the conclusion that Hizballah trains Iran, not the other way around.⁴⁸⁸

In counterinsurgency, having superior military forces does not automatically guarantee victory. The war of perceptions is sometimes just as integral to determining success as tactical and operational ability on the battlefield. While there is certainly an element of ‘David versus Goliath’ when comparing Hizballah’s forces with the Israel’s, it was the IDF’s indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon that drew the most ire from the Lebanese population and the broader international community.⁴⁸⁹ In “Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War,” William M. Arkin assessed that as the conflict continued over the course of thirty-three days, Israel’s use of air power was of diminishing value because of the lack of discrimination among its targets.⁴⁹⁰ Although he remains a staunch supporter of the use of airpower in COIN, Arkin concludes that “Hizballah may not have defeated Israel on the battlefield, but the organization won the hearts and minds of many.”⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ Michael Kenney, “Dumb Yet Deadly,” p.912. To be sure, IRGC trainers may well have experience fighting in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War but this was, for the most part, a conventional war between conventional militaries and not an insurgency waged using terrorist and guerilla tactics.

⁴⁸⁸ Exum, “Hizballah at War,” p.7.

⁴⁸⁹ In *Bombing to Win*, Robert Pape asserts that punishment through air power generates more public anger against the attacker than against the target.

⁴⁹⁰ Steven Erlanger, “Book Faults Israeli Air War in Lebanon,” *New York Times*, October 14, 2007.

⁴⁹¹ William M. Arkin, “Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hizballah War,” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2007, p.104. For essential reading on the role of airpower in COIN, see James S. Corum and Wray R. Johnson, *Airpower in Small Wars: Fighting Insurgents and Terrorists*, Lawrence Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2003 and Alan J. Vick et al., *Air Power in the New Counterinsurgency Era: The Strategic Importance of USAF Advisory and Assistance Missions*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2006.

The “hearts and minds” component of the conflict is anything but trivial. Various commentators, including Amnesty International, then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, and former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, all condemned Israel’s conduct of the war and depicted Israel as the aggressor, even though Hizballah’s actions initiated the skirmish.⁴⁹² The damage Israel inflicted on Hizballah will yield short-term gains at the expense of long-term, strategic objectives.

3.4.3 Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

Hizballah’s ideology and public statements make clear that “negotiating with Israel is only a form of compromise that validates Israel’s occupation of Palestine,” and as such, Hizballah will never sign any agreement with Israel, make peace with the Jewish state, or otherwise legitimate the existence of Israel.⁴⁹³ Yet, Hizballah *has* negotiated with Israel on more than one occasion, even if only through intermediaries. Negotiations have been held regarding the “rules of the game,” in southern Lebanon (with the help of German mediation in 1996) and also negotiated exchanges for the bodies of dead fighters.⁴⁹⁴ This section examines the Taif Accords of 1989 and the ongoing negotiations between Syria and Israel to determine what lessons can be learned from history and whether or not Hizballah might ever decide to officially recognize Israel and declare an end to its three decade old insurgency against Tel Aviv.

⁴⁹² Barnea, “Israel vs. Hizballah.”

⁴⁹³ Norton, “Walking Between Raindrops,” p.89.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, p.99.

3.4.3.1 Taif Accords (1989)

The first major breakthrough in the thirty year insurgency raging in Lebanon was the signing of the Taif Accords in 1989, a peace agreement which officially ended the Lebanese civil war. A tri-partite commission of Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Algeria helped broker the agreement, with the Saudis playing the biggest role. As a result of the Taif Accords, the President was still reserved for a Christian, the Prime Minister would still be a position held for a Sunni Muslim, but now the Prime Minister would be responsible not to the President, but instead to the legislature, as in a traditional parliamentary system.

Hizballah did not play the role of spoiler in the process, but on the whole, the group was unhappy with the outcome. Essentially, the Taif Accords cemented the notion of a “shared existence” between the various sectarian groups in Lebanon and altered the balance of power by taking some authority away from the Maronites.⁴⁹⁵ Other changes initiated by the agreement were an increase from 108 to 208 members of Parliament, divided equally among Muslims and Christians. But the Shiites in Lebanon felt that not enough was done to change the system. In their eyes, the changes left the Maronites to play the “hegemonic role” in the political system while Muslims would now be “politically accountable, yet without any real power.”⁴⁹⁶

But how radically did the Taif Accords change the reality on the ground in Lebanon? While the accords did modify certain principles, they did not alter the basic character of Lebanon’s system and as such, the country remains “more-or-less a consociational

⁴⁹⁵ Elizabeth Picard, *Lebanon: A Shattered Country*, New York: Holmes and Meier 2002, p.157.

⁴⁹⁶ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu’llah*, p.27.

democracy.”⁴⁹⁷ The intent of the accords were to bring about an end to the violence while also finding a way to reconfigure the political system in such a way that it mollified or at least seriously addressed the grievances of all of Lebanon’s ethnic communities and thus suffocated the embers of civil war in such a way as to not have them flare up again. However, as Hudson concludes, “Taif in practice deviated significantly from Taif in theory.”⁴⁹⁸

As part of the Taif Accords, which became official when the parties in agreement signed the ‘Document of National Understanding’ on September 21, 1990, all militias throughout the country *except* Hizballah were to disarm.⁴⁹⁹ Because it held a unique role as a “resistance force” fighting the Israelis in southern Lebanon, Hizballah was allowed to retain its weapons and remain armed. This final part is quite interesting from a historical perspective because it begs the question: if the Israelis did not occupy the security zone at the time of the Taif Accords, would Hizballah have been forced to disarm as part of the agreement, thus ushering the group into mainstream politics while simultaneously “declawing the ‘Party of God?’” To be fair, another part of the Taif Accords called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops, which had maintained a presence in Lebanon even longer than the Israelis did, dating back to 1976.⁵⁰⁰ Syrian withdrawal did not occur until 2005, and even though the Syrian presence drew far less ire from everyday Lebanese than did the Israeli occupation, the fact that both the Syrian and Israeli militaries refused to flinch until the other did first only further complicated efforts to

⁴⁹⁷ Michael C. Hudson, “Trying Again: Power-Sharing in Post-Civil War Lebanon,” *International Negotiation*, Vol.2, No.1, 1997, p.113.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid, p.114.

⁴⁹⁹ The actual peace agreement signed as part of the Taif Accords has been referred to in the literature as “the National Accord Document for Lebanon,” “the Document of National Understanding,” and “the Document of National Reconciliation.” All three terms refer to the same document.

⁵⁰⁰ Paul Salem, “The Future of Lebanon,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.85, Iss.6, Nov/Dec 2006.

broker a peace deal between the two countries. As a result, Lebanon was stuck in the middle.

Analysis of Hizballah's behavior in the lead up to and the immediate aftermath of Taif revealed an interesting transition that would forecast the group's future moves. By acceding to the stipulations laid out in Taif, Hizballah went from a "revolutionary 'total refusal' anti-system party" to an "anti-system 'protest' party."⁵⁰¹ This shift attenuated the power of the ideologues and strengthened the hand of those in favor or participating, at least theoretically, in the Lebanese political system. Still, this seemingly slight shift produced major implications.

Even though Hizballah was not particularly pleased with the main pillars of the Taif Accords, the group made no attempts to sabotage the peace process. One of Hizballah's central tenets is the avoidance of public disorder, and the group's one time Secretary General Husayn al-Mussawi continually reinforced the message that even 'an oppressive government is preferable to chaos.'⁵⁰² In retrospect, the Taif Accords marked the beginning of Hizballah's long-term strategy of infiltrating the political system with the aim of changing the system gradually, simply through participation.

3.4.3.2 The Golan Heights

At this stage in the game, Hizballah is in a position to call its own shots and negotiate (or more importantly, not negotiate), when and how it wants. But for much of its existence, the main obstacle to disarming Hizballah was the absence of a peace agreement between Israel and Syria.⁵⁰³ In 1983, Israel reached a peace agreement with Lebanon to end its occupation only to

⁵⁰¹ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu'llah*, pp.26-27.

⁵⁰² Ibid, p.28.

⁵⁰³ Norton, "Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," p.33.

have Syria step in and force the Lebanese government to abrogate the treaty in March 1984.⁵⁰⁴

The dispute between Israel and Syria dates back to the 1967 Six-Day War when Israel captured the Golan Heights, which it officially annexed in 1981.⁵⁰⁵ A function of geography, the Golan Heights represent a significant military advantage, as the side that controls this territory maintains both an offensive and defensive edge due to the plateau's elevation. Furthermore, the Golan (and the still disputed Shebaa Farms regions) is valuable for the water resources contained within this area in what is otherwise desolate terrain.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has made clear that a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan is a prerequisite to any potential peace deal.⁵⁰⁶ Still, one has to wonder if the Syrians would be willing to make peace with Israel and demand the disarmament of Hizballah even if the Israelis were to relinquish their claim to the Golan, a long- shot proposition in its own right. Syrian intransigence was one of the main reasons that Israel withdrew from Lebanon unilaterally, and not as part of a broader peace deal. US brokered peace agreements between Israel and Syria stalled in both 1999 (in Shepherdstown, West Virginia) and 2000 (in Geneva, Switzerland).⁵⁰⁷

Norton has referred to Lebanon as a “pawn in the regional game” between Israel, Syria, and Iran, with other actors, including the United States, France, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey involved peripatetically at various points.⁵⁰⁸ In 2012, the positions of the players and the

⁵⁰⁴ Dalia Dassa Kaye, “The Israeli Decision to Withdraw from Southern Lebanon: Political Leadership and Security Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol.117, No.4, 2002/2003, p.564.

⁵⁰⁵ For a thorough analysis of the Six-Day War, see Michael B. Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

⁵⁰⁶ Jaber, *Born with a Vengeance*, p.74.

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with Jonathan Stevenson, November 3, 2011.

⁵⁰⁸ Norton with Schwedler, “(In)security Zones in South Lebanon,” *Journal of Palestine Studies*, XXIII, no.1 Autumn 1993, pp.75.

dimensions of the regional game look drastically different than they did a decade ago. Both Israel and Syria have withdrawn their military forces from Lebanon. The survival of the Syrian regime is in question and Iran's regional position is arguably much stronger following the removal of Saddam Hussein from power and other regional developments across the Middle East. Most importantly, Hizballah appears to be firmly entrenched in the Lebanese government while still retaining the capability to incite a regional conflagration by provoking Israel, as it did in July 2006.

Following the cease-fire between Hizballah and Israel in July 2006, several Israeli cabinet ministers, including Defense Minister Amir Peretz and Internal Security Minister Avi Dichter, proposed the idea of restarting negotiations with Syria over the Golan Heights.⁵⁰⁹ Members of the Likud party criticized the government for appearing to negotiate from a position of weakness, although back channel negotiations still took place. However, with lingering instability in Damascus and the war of words escalating between Washington and Tehran, even resolving what was once thought to be an intractable problem will not guarantee success on the issue of disarming Hizballah.

3.4.4 Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS)

A mutually hurting stalemate can provide the opportunity for what Zartman has dubbed "a ripe moment." These moments can present themselves following long periods of tit-for tat-violence, or major flare-ups of fighting punctuated by aggressive military incursions and operations. While there was several "ripe moments" throughout Israel's eighteen-year occupation of

⁵⁰⁹Barnea, "Israel vs. Hizballah," pp.22-27.

southern Lebanon, none were able to produce a serious breakthrough in the stalemate. And although Israel's military is far superior to Hizballah's guerilla insurgency, by the mid- 1990s the ratio of Hizballah to IDF/SLA casualties was less than 2:1, down from a ratio of 5:1 in the 1980s.⁵¹⁰

3.4.4.1 Israeli Withdrawal (2000)

The decision to withdraw Israeli forces from southern Lebanon in 2000 capped the end to an eighteen year occupation that began in 1982 with *Operation Peace for Galilee*, an operation ostensibly intended to remove the threat of Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) guerillas launching attacks against Israel from Lebanese territory.⁵¹¹ *Galilee* was an effort to finish the job left undone four years earlier by *Operation Litani*, the first major Israeli incursion into Lebanon aimed at countering the threat of Palestinian terrorists recently relocated from Jordan to Beirut. After three years of operating in southern Lebanon (in direct violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 425 which called for Israel to withdraw to the recognized international border), the Israeli government voted on and approved a measure to establish a "security zone" in southern Lebanon on January 14, 1985.⁵¹² The security zone was demonstrable evidence of Israel's commitment to occupying Lebanon on a long-term basis,

⁵¹⁰ Norton, "Walking between Raindrops," p.97.

⁵¹¹ A cogent and highly readable synopsis of *Operation Peace for Galilee* is found in Chaim Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli Wars: War and Peace in the Middle East from the War of Independence through Lebanon*, New York: Random House, 1984, pp.339-370.

⁵¹² During the initial phase of the security zone operation, the ISF relied on a force structure more suitable for high-intensity conflicts than counterinsurgency. The obstacles encountered by the IDF in making this transition are documented in Tamir Libel, "Crossing the Lebanese Swamp: Structural and Doctrinal Implications on the Israeli Defense Forces of Engagement in the Southern Lebanon Security Zone, 1985-2000," *Marine Corps University Journal*, Vol.2, No.1, Spring 2011. See also, Eliot A. Cohen, Michael J. Eisenstadt, and Andrew J. Bacevich, *Knives, Tanks, and Missiles: Israel's Security Revolution*, Washington D.C.: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1998.

building a defense infrastructure that consisted of forty-five SLA and IDF outposts, between 1,000 and 1,500 Israeli soldiers, and 2,500 Southern Lebanon Army fighters, in addition to another several hundred Israeli intelligence officials spread over a 328 square mile area.⁵¹³ It also demonstrated Israel's disregard for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which Israel clearly saw as an inferior instrument of ensuring security in the area. The stated reason for establishing the security zone was to counter attacks from Palestinian guerillas as well as to prevent Hizballah from launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel.

In 1993 and 1996, respectively, Israel responded to Hizballah incursions over the Lebanese-Israeli border with *Operation Accountability* and *Operation Grapes of Wrath*. The former operation was ordered in response to escalatory attacks traded back and forth between Hizballah and Israel in the early 1990s. These included the Israeli assassination of then-Hizballah Secretary General Abbas Musawi in 1992 and counterattacks by Hizballah that included the 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires, as well as an intensified campaign of mortar and rocket attacks in northern Galilee. Throughout *Operation Accountability*, Israeli warplanes bombed the Shia villages of southern Lebanon, causing thousands of Shia to flee north to Beirut.⁵¹⁴

The goal of the IDF was to pressure the Lebanese government into restraining Hizballah. But the very idea that the Lebanese government had the ability to achieve this objective, even in the face of mounting Israeli pressure, was vigorously debated within Israel at the time. Many believed that Beirut lacked this capability, especially as the government was only three years

⁵¹³ Gal Luft, "Israel's Security Zone in Lebanon—A Tragedy?," *Middle East Quarterly*, September 2000, p.14.

⁵¹⁴ Eyal Zisser, "Hizballah in Lebanon: At the Crossroads," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Volume 1, No.3, September 1997.

removed from a civil war and by 1993 Hizballah was already a well-trained and equipped force within Lebanon. In reality, only Syria was capable of reining in Hizballah and although the end of *Accountability* appeared to some members of Israel's Knesset as an opportune moment to initiate peace talks with the Syrians, correctly identifying this break in the fighting as a "ripe moment, Israeli military officials saw the security zone as essential to protecting Galilee and other parts of northern Israel."⁵¹⁵ In what would lead to another seven years of perpetual stalemate, the most concrete result of this operation was the establishment of "the rules of the game."

"The rules of the game," is a phrase that was an axiom developed over time and tacitly recognized by all sides following *Accountability* in 1993. According to "the rules,"—brokered in part by France, Iran, Israel, Syria, and the United States—Hizballah would not target Israel proper if Israel refrained from targeting Lebanese civilians or civilian targets.⁵¹⁶ Although both sides often violated "the rules," they became codified in a sense and legitimately placed a limit of sorts on conflict between Israel and Hizballah. In fact, according to Norton, when Hizballah insurgents killed Israeli soldiers within the confines of the security zone, IDF spokespersons referred to these killings as having been "within the rules."⁵¹⁷

"The rules of the game" were blatantly violated during Israel's *Operation Grapes of Wrath* in 1996, which is best remembered for the Israeli shelling of more than 100 Muslim and Christian civilians who had taken shelter at a United Nations base in Qana, Lebanon.⁵¹⁸ The site

⁵¹⁵ Kaye, "The Israeli Decision to Withdraw," p.565.

⁵¹⁶ Norton, "Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," p.29.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid, p.27.

of a cemetery for the victims has become a shrine and place where Lebanese of all backgrounds make regular pilgrimages. The Qana massacre is commonly cited as one of the major reasons for the “underlying hatred” of Israel that continues to “fester” more than fifteen years after the killings.⁵¹⁹ All told, Israel conducted over 2,000 air raids and dispensed over 25,000 artillery shells but still failed to achieve its strategy of ‘circular pressure,’ which Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin explained was an attempt to use “coercion as a tool of diplomacy” to pressure non-Shia Lebanese citizens to disarm Hizballah.⁵²⁰

The period between 1994 and Israel’s withdrawal six years later was characterized by Hizballah ambushes against the IDF throughout the security zone, a severe curtailment of COIN force freedom of movement, and the gradual erosion of morale among the Israeli military forces stationed in Lebanon.⁵²¹ Between May 1993 and May 1997, Israel suffered an eight percent casualty rate among its soldiers serving in southern Lebanon, a relatively high rate of attrition considering the modest number of combatants deployed to the area.⁵²² But the event that marked a renewed push among Israeli citizens for the military to withdraw from Lebanon was a 1997 helicopter crash, Israel’s version of ‘Black Hawk Down,’ that killed seventy three soldiers and became the symbol of a countrywide protest movement throughout Israel led by the *Four Mothers* movement.⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ Norton, “Hizballah: From Radicalism to Pragmatism? *Middle East Policy*, Vol.5, January 1998, p.153.

⁵²⁰ Wehrey, “Clash of Wills,” p.61 and note 42. For further reading on this, see Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (NY: Norton, 2001) pp.560-1 and Martin van Creveld, *The Sword and the Olive: A Critical History of the Israeli Defense Force*, New York: Public Affairs, 1998, pp.304-5.

⁵²¹ Wehrey, “Clash of Wills,” p.62.

⁵²² Clive Jones, “Israeli Counter-Insurgency Strategy and the War in South Lebanon, 1985-97,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.8, No.3, pp.89-90.

⁵²³ The *Four Mothers* movement was the most high profile protest movement in Israel calling for a withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. The group was founded by mothers of soldiers serving in Lebanon following the 1997

While some military officials within Israel welcomed the stalemate with Hizballah in lieu of a violent escalation, by 2000 a consensus had been reached that the “indefinite nature of the operation” in southern Lebanon actually made Israel less safe and more vulnerable to attack.⁵²⁴ Toward the end of the occupation, the conflict in Lebanon had been framed as “Israel’s Vietnam,” a morass that had come to be viewed as a “tragedy,” in stark juxtaposition to the narrative of “Lebanon as heroic work,” that was the norm among the majority of Israeli citizens and officials in the early and intermediate stages of the conflict.⁵²⁵

Following the election of Ehud Barack as prime minister in 1999, an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon became a *fait accompli* and was officially set in motion in the summer of 2000. According to Dalia Dassa Kaye, whose research focuses on the role of political leadership in reframing ‘the Lebanon issue,’ the Israeli withdrawal “marked a dramatic turning point in Israeli security policy.”⁵²⁶ But for anyone hoping that Israel’s withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 would provide the much needed opening to initiate a dialogue between Israel and Syria and ultimately lead to the disarming of Hizballah, their hopes were soon dashed. Shortly following the Israeli withdrawal, Hassan Nasrallah publicly stated that “As long as Israel threatens Lebanon every day with air strikes, attacks, and punishment, Lebanon has the right to maintain all elements of strength that can confront these Israeli threats.”⁵²⁷

helicopter crash and despite accusations of the movement that it contributed to sapping soldier morale, the *Four Mothers* “became a major player in the national debate” over withdrawal. Kaye, “The Israeli Decision to Withdraw,” pp.562-571.

⁵²⁴ Ibid, p.569.

⁵²⁵ Ibid, pp.575-6.

⁵²⁶ Ibid, p.561.

⁵²⁷ Susan Severeid, “Hizballah Chief Says Guerillas Will Not Disarm as Border Tension Declines,” *Associated Press*, May 29, 2000.

3.4.4.2 Consociationalism & Civil War in Lebanon

Military stalemate in an insurgency rarely tells the whole story. In Lebanon, the country's unique ethnic/religious makeup and confessional political system contributed to an ongoing political deadlock that prevented the government from making a modicum of progress on some of the most pressing political issues. Hudson's analysis of Lebanon's consociationalist political system described the system as government rule by a cartel of ethno-sectarian elites responsible for managing "their respective 'flocks'" and maintaining a civilized working relationship.⁵²⁸

This system of government was a byproduct of Lebanon's legacy of colonialism and a pragmatic attempt to balance the levers of power between a population that was one-third Shia Muslim, one-third Sunni Muslim, one-third Christian Maronite, with a smattering of 'other,' to include Armenian Christians, Greek Orthodox, Druze, Phalangists, and Palestinian refugees.

The Lebanese Civil War lasted from 1975 to 1990 and led quickly to the breakdown of government structures as Lebanon was engulfed by anarchy, earning the nickname the "militia republic."⁵²⁹ The multi-dimensional nature of the conflict saw "several phases, each marked by complex shifting alliances and dozens of failed cease-fire agreements."⁵³⁰ In fifteen years of fighting, the war included both large-scale massacres of civilians (the most notable of which was the infamous slaughter of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in 1982) and vast numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee flows.

Besides the myriad Lebanese actors involved in the civil war, regional rivalries between

⁵²⁸ Hudson, "Trying Again," p.105. For a thorough treatment of Lebanon's political system, see Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Modernization in Lebanon*, New York: Random House, 1985.

⁵²⁹ Hudson, "Trying Again," p.112.

⁵³⁰ Ibid, p.109. It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail each side involved in the fighting at various points of Lebanon's civil war. In my opinion, the most vivid recount of the war is offered by Thomas Friedman in *From Beirut to Jerusalem*.

Syria and the PLO, the PLO and Israel, Israel and Syria, and Iran and Iraq, each contributed to the chaos in Lebanon.⁵³¹ As I detail in the forthcoming section on conflict resolution, messy insurgencies lead to messy outcomes. Indeed, as Connable and Libicki note, “insurgencies with more than two clear parties involved have longer, more violent, and more complex endings.”⁵³² By this criterion, Lebanon was no exception. At one point in the conflict, more than ten separate autonomous political-military organizations were involved in the fighting and any recognizable pillar of government had dissolved altogether.⁵³³

3.4.5 Decision-Making Structure and Process

Hizballah’s decision-making process will never seem entirely transparent to outside observers. After all, the organization is a globally-designated terrorist group and must maintain a level of secrecy, operational security, and overall opaqueness. According to a report by the International Crisis Group, while Hizballah’s constituency is influential and typically factored into the group’s decision-making process, more weight is given to “members of the leadership who hold harder line views on both social and political matters.”⁵³⁴ In accordance with Irvin’s typology, these are the ideologues and radicals. Holding considerable although not infallible authority over the *Majlis Shura al-Qarar*, or Decision-making Consultative Council, is Nasrallah.⁵³⁵ Decisions are

⁵³¹ Ibid, p.112.

⁵³² Connable and Libicki, *How Insurgencies End*, p.xvi.

⁵³³ Hudson, “Trying Again,” p.112.

⁵³⁴ ICG,Report, “Rebel Without a Cause,” p.2.

⁵³⁵ The ICG mentions upfront that much of what is said or reported on Hizballah’s decision-making process is difficult to verify due to hierarchy, discipline of the group members, and a code of secrecy. Ibid, p.2.

normally reached through consensus and occasionally by a formal vote. Other influential groups within Hizballah's decision-making structure are high-ranking resistance fighters and key personnel from the security and intelligence agencies.⁵³⁶

3.4.5.1 'Lebanonization' and the Electoral Process (1992)

As detailed above, the death of Khomeini in 1989 prompted a critical reappraisal of Hizballah's strategy following the end of Lebanon's civil war. The most controversial topic in the early days of a Post-Taif Lebanon was whether Hizballah would contest the parliamentary elections in 1992. Up until this point, Hizballah maintained a policy of abstaining from political participation, even though Fadlallah had argued against this policy for years.⁵³⁷

The 'Lebanonization' process that began after Khomeini died gained steam in the first two years of the 1990s and signaled not only Hizballah's acceptance of a multi-religious Lebanon but also the tacit recognition of the legitimacy of the state's political institutions.⁵³⁸ As with most significant decisions, the actual decision to enter formally into politics "was heavily debated within Hizballah," according to K. E. Wiegand.⁵³⁹ Much like the PIRA, an important sticking point for those who decided to support the move into politics was that the "bullet and the ballot" were not mutually exclusive. Therefore, sitting for elections did not preclude maintaining a militia with an arsenal and continuing to exist as a resistance movement.

By the early 1990s, Hizballah's leadership came to believe that the longer the group

⁵³⁶ Ibid, pp.2-3.

⁵³⁷ Norton, "Walking Between Raindrops," p.93.

⁵³⁸ K.E. Wiegand, "Reform of a Terrorist Group: Hezbollah as a Lebanese Political Party," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.32, Iss.8, 2009, p.673.

⁵³⁹ Ibid, p.674.

stayed out of politics, the more influence it was leaving on the table. Shortly before Hizballah participated in the 1992 elections, in which it would claim eight of 108 seats, Nasrallah announced, “It is important for the party to be represented in the Lebanese parliament in order to contribute to the elimination of political confessionalism, which is one of the party’s main goals.”⁵⁴⁰ Cliff Staten, who looks at Hizballah through the lens of political opportunity structures, has surmised that Hizballah’s reputation as a “clean” party stood in contrast to other Lebanese political parties which were notoriously mired in corruption.⁵⁴¹

Hizballah’s decision to make a foray into political life reflects a tectonic shift within the movement itself as power diffused from ideologues to radicals. This shift came at the expense of hard-liners in Iran who saw Hizballah as a direct extension of the legacy of the Islamic Revolution. Again, it is necessary to reemphasize here that Sheikh Fadlallah was a major figure in pushing for the moderation of the group’s stance in favor of eschewing elections. Fadlallah insisted that because an Islamic state would not be feasible to achieve given Lebanon’s diverse society, gradual reformation of the party’s views were essential if Hizballah was to make progress and secure the ability to affect Lebanon’s political, social, and economic realities. As Norton observes, “by being inside the political system, Hizballah might also be able to shape political dialogue to its benefit, as well as head off problematic initiatives,” including the Lebanese national budget.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴⁰ Quoted in Nizar A. Hamzeh, “Lebanon’s Hizballah: From Islamic Revolution to Parliamentary Accommodation,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.14, Iss.2, 1993, note 9, p.325.

⁵⁴¹ Cliff Staten, “From Terrorism to Legitimacy: Political Opportunity Structures and the Case of Hizballah,” *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*,” Vol.8, Iss.1, 2008, pp.32-49.

⁵⁴² Norton, *Hezbollah*, pp.98-99.

3.4.5.2 Relationship with Iran and Syria

There is no doubt that Iran has played a major role in Hizballah's rise from a disorganized militia to a powerful politico-military force in Lebanon. It is widely known that both Syria and Iran exert some level of influence over Hizballah's decision-making, although Syria's role has been minimized and Iran's influence has waxed considerably since the death of Khomeini. Khamenei lacks the same currency with Hizballah's leadership and "although in theory Khomeini has the final say, his role appears to be more subtle," never overruling a single decision made by the Consultative Council.⁵⁴³ His influence via Hizballah is *de jure* rather than *de facto* and as his approval has been reduced to little more than a rubber stamp.

The relationship between Iran and Hizballah is based on a shared ideology and a financial backing that provides Hizballah with both money and weapons to ensure that Israel must account for the threat on its border. But despite Iran's role as a "sugar daddy" of sorts, Hizballah does not take orders from Tehran nor does it operate at the behest of the Iranian government, the *Pasdaran*, or the Supreme Leader.⁵⁴⁴ Most experts agree that Iran had no operational involvement with the planning and execution of Hizballah's 2006 conflict with Israel.⁵⁴⁵ Still, after observing the popularity that the battle generated for Hizballah throughout the region, the Iranians were quick to take credit. More recently, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Iran of using Hizballah to strike at Israeli targets abroad, including the July 2012

⁵⁴³ ICG Report, "Rebel without a Cause," p.4.

⁵⁴⁴ Graham E. Fuller, "The Hizballah-Iran Connection: Model for Sunni Resistance," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.30, Iss.1, Winter 2006/2007, p.143.

⁵⁴⁵ Robert Grace and Andrew Mandelbaum, "Understanding the Iran-Hizballah Connection," United States Institute of Peace, September 2006.

suicide bombing of a Bulgarian bus that killed five Israeli tourists.⁵⁴⁶ Other attacks have been thwarted in locales as diverse as Cyprus, Kenya, India, Thailand, and Georgia.

This “policy of rapprochement” has cemented Hizballah’s position within Lebanon’s confessional political system, but Nasrallah’s public statements are often explicitly clear in conveying Hizballah’s unwillingness to even consider making peace with Israel.⁵⁴⁷ Still, just as was the case with the PIRA, when it comes to “never saying never,” actions speak louder than words. Like Gerry Adams did with the British in Northern Ireland, Nasrallah takes a hard line against Israel in his public statements. To those like Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson who believe Hizballah is ready to “shift more decisively into the political realm,” incendiary speeches are interpreted as both posturing for Tehran while simultaneously mollifying the hard-liners within the group— until the conditions become ripe for a deal to be struck.⁵⁴⁸

Of the two countries, Syria has played the role of junior partner to Iran in its dealings with Hizballah. This is not to downplay Syria’s role in Lebanese affairs, however. Syria has served as the main conduit for Iranian arms passing into Hizballah-controlled Lebanese territory. Moreover, Syria has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to manipulate Lebanese internal political dynamics from 1992 until 2005, when Syria was forced minimize its presence in Lebanon following the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005.⁵⁴⁹ Up until the 2005 Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, Syria relied on Hizballah and to a

⁵⁴⁶ Joby Warrick, “Attack on Israeli Tourists Prompts Fears of Escalating ‘Shadow War,’” *Washington Post*, July 19, 2012.

⁵⁴⁷ Saad-Ghorayeb, *Hizbu’llah*, p.156.

⁵⁴⁸ Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson, “Disarming Hizballah: Advancing Regional Stability,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 2010; also see, Steven N. Simon and Jonathan Stevenson, “Declawing the ‘Party of God,’” *World Policy Journal*, Summer 2001.

⁵⁴⁹ Norton, “The Role of Hezbollah in Lebanese Domestic Politics,” p.482.

lesser extent the Lebanese government to further its regional policy objectives, especially as these related to countering Israeli hegemony in the Middle East.⁵⁵⁰

3.4.6 Why did Hizballah Negotiate?

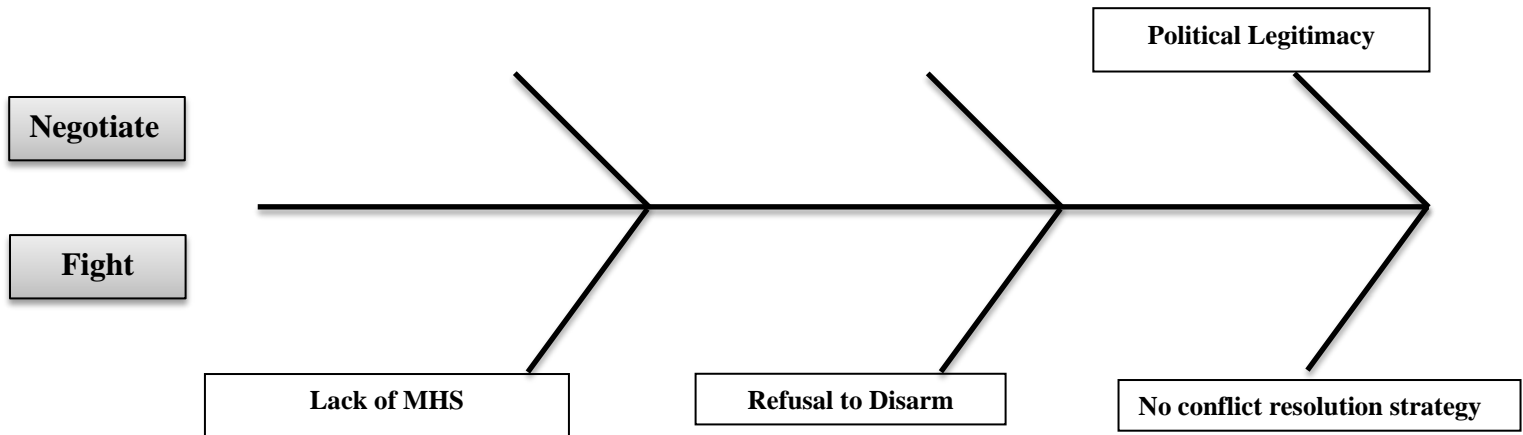


Figure 10: Hizballah Negotiation Factors

Hizballah is a unique insurgent group to analyze because of its' truly hybrid nature. It is, without a doubt, part political party and part 'army without a state.' Why did Hizballah choose the path toward 'Lebanonization' in the first place and make a foray into politics if it never intended to make the full transition to political party? The short answer is, because it could. As detailed above in the section on the 1992 elections, Hizballah's decision to enter the Lebanese political system was not a default decision, but one that was debated at length within the group.⁵⁵¹ The

⁵⁵⁰ Judith Harik, "Syrian Foreign Policy and State/Resistance Dynamics in Lebanon," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol.20, No.3, pp.249-265.

⁵⁵¹ Wiegand, "Support of a Terrorist Group," p.674.

rationale behind the decision was the following: by entering the political process, Hizballah would become a legitimate actor in Lebanese politics. If the group was legitimate, then so was its continued resistance.⁵⁵²

At the time that Hizballah made the decision, the group's political leverage over the Lebanese government, due in large part to Syrian backing, allowed it to stand for elections without having to jettison its weapons. Just two years removed from a decade and a half long civil war, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) were in the process of being reconstructed. Hizballah's operational tools, including its training, intelligence, *and* weapons, meant that it was the only Lebanese entity capable of defending the south of the country, which in 1992 was still occupied by the IDF (and would continue to be for another eight years). Moreover, unlike the nascent LAF, as a military force, Hizballah was willing to take casualties defending Lebanon.

Still, joining the political process was not without its cost to the Party of God. In exchange for entrance into Lebanese politics, Hizballah agreed to alter its objectives to achieve its domestic political goals. This included pursuing a more moderate political agenda, honoring the post-Taif confessional system, softening its rhetoric, and working with the majority government parties on a range of issues.⁵⁵³ The most obvious concession Hizballah made was to abandon its aspirations of remaking Lebanon into an Islamic republic ruled by *sharia* law. A further price to pay for achieving status as an opposition party within the government was the agreement not to use violence for domestic political purposes. Hizballah's continued resistance against Israel in the zone of occupation was officially recognized as legitimate by the Lebanese government, a point insisted upon by Hizballah's Syrian overlords.

⁵⁵² Naim Qaseem, *Hizballah: The Story from Within*, trans. D.Khalil, London: Saqi, 2005, p.190.

⁵⁵³ Bilal Y. Saab, "Rethinking Hizballah's Disarmament," *Middle East Policy*, Vol.15, Iss.3, 2008, p.96.

3.4.6.1 Why hasn't Hizballah Negotiated Completely?

If it is clear why Hizballah negotiated its way into the Lebanese political system, it is less apparent why the group has refused to negotiate completely. Much of the literature on why insurgents abandon violence or what factors shape organizational behavior once the group has fully transitioned into politics assumes a linear progression from terrorist to statesman.⁵⁵⁴ I argue that there are three main reasons why Hizballah has not made the complete transition to political party and has instead decided its best interests are served by functioning as a hybrid politico-military organization.

First, none of the sides in the Lebanese insurgency have recognized the existence of a military stalemate. Hizballah's 2006 conflict with Israel reinforced this reality. By fighting the Jewish state to a standstill, Hizballah was lionized throughout the Arab and Muslim world as a vanguard of Islamic resistance. For its part too, Israel declared victory, despite the fact that Hizballah refused to surrender the two Israeli soldiers it kidnapped to begin the conflagration. The safe return of these soldiers, whom Israel now believes are dead, was a stated objective of the IDF in launching its attacks on Hizballah. Despite the establishment of a political wing, Hizballah still relies on its military wing to achieve certain objectives. Unlike the relationship between Sinn Fein and the PIRA, the relationship between Hizballah's political and military

⁵⁵⁴ See Seth G. Jones and Martin C. Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering Al Qaeda*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2008; Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009; Dipak K. Gupta, *Understanding Terrorism and Political Violence: The Life Cycle of Birth, Growth, Transformation and Demise*, New York: Routledge, 2008; John Horgan, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, New York: Routledge, 2009. On how political wings impact the decision to relinquish violence, see Kevin Siquiera, "Political and Militant Wings within Dissident Movements and Organizations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.19, Iss.2, 2005; Bruce W. Dayton and Louis Kriesberg, *Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace*, New York: Routledge, 2009; Matthew Soberg Shugart, "Guerillas and Elections: An Institutional Perspective on the Costs of Conflict and Competition," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol.6, Iss.2, 1992; and Shelly Deane, "Crime Corrupting Credibility: the Problem of Shifting from Paramilitaries to Parliamentarians," *Civil Wars*, Vol.10, Iss.4, 2008.

wings has never reached the level of mutual opposition or competition. On the contrary, these two entities enjoy a symbiotic relationship characterized by strategic cooperation.⁵⁵⁵

Second, in the case of Hizballah, politics has not been tied to a clear-cut conflict resolution strategy. Hizballah's insurgency is primarily against Israel, even though the IDF no longer occupies Lebanon proper. Nevertheless, following the Israeli withdrawal in 2000, Hizballah maintained that Israel still occupied the Shebaa Farms, and thus its insurgency would continue. According to Wiegand, "[F]rom 2000 to early 2005, Hizballah's status became more legitimate, despite its continued control of an armed militia."⁵⁵⁶ Violence is still seen by Hizballah as a primary tool to affect change. And why shouldn't it be viewed this way, since the group's use of violence almost always produces the desired results. In May 2008, Hizballah insurgents stormed downtown Beirut and sparked fighting that resulted in the deaths of 65 people. The political violence was employed ostensibly to protest the removal of a pro-Hizballah manager at the Beirut airport and investigations into Hizballah's private communications network. In the end, in exchange for a promise not to use violence domestically to settle political disputes (which should have been implicit in the group's agreement to join the political process back in 1992), Hizballah was granted veto power within the Lebanese parliament.⁵⁵⁷

Third, despite examples of success in cases where the two were not linked, the international community has insisted that disarmament take place as a first step in the international recognition of Hizballah's legitimacy. As a matter of fact, Hizballah is a political

⁵⁵⁵ Benedetta Berti, "Armed Groups as Political Parties and Their Role in Electoral Politics: The Case of Hizballah," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol.34, Iss.12, 2011.

⁵⁵⁶ Wiegand, "Support of a Terrorist Group," p.676.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid, p.677.

powerhouse in Lebanon with a strong base of popular support, as evident through its success in elections both parliamentary (1992, 1996, 2000, 2005) and municipal elections (1998, 2004). The stark reality is that the Party of God is not going away. Yet, both Israel and significant members of the international community refuse to recognize Hizballah, even tacitly, as a legitimate political party.⁵⁵⁸ One of the primary motivations for the Israelis in the July 2006 war was to disarm Hizballah through military action. Both UNSCR 1559 and UNSCR 1701 call for Hizballah to disband its arsenal. But the group has no incentives to do so and insisting on Hizballah's disarmament as a precursor to international recognition is only prolonging the group's transformation from a hybrid to a full-blown political party.

While it is not a direct reason for its refusal to negotiate, Hizballah's war chest has allowed the group to continue its hybrid operations. Hizballah's funding stream derives from a combination of state sponsorship, an array of organized criminal activities, donations made from the Lebanese diaspora and other sympathizers abroad, as well as legitimate businesses. From Iran alone, Hizballah is estimated to receive \$200 million annually.⁵⁵⁹ This money is transferred to the terrorist group in deliveries of cash, in the form of weapons, and through private charities linked to Iran's leadership.⁵⁶⁰

Even as its own economy suffers under increasing sanctions, Iran continues to fund Hizballah because the simple fact is that Iran needs Hizballah. The showdown over Iran's

⁵⁵⁸ Hizballah is recognized as a legitimate political party within Lebanon, throughout much of the Arab world, and even by several Western governments, including the United Kingdom, despite its classification as a terrorist group by the US and others.

⁵⁵⁹ Matthew Levitt, "Hezbollah Finance: Funding the Party of God," in Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas, *Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, p.137.

⁵⁶⁰ Some of these private charities include the Al Aqsa International Foundation, the Martyr's Organization, the Institute of the Palestinian Martyrs, and the al Mabarrat Charity Association.

nuclear program has led to an escalating ‘shadow war’ between Iran on one side and Israel and the United States on the other.⁵⁶¹ This war has the plotlines and characters of a great spy novel. Iran accuses the Tel Aviv-Washington alliance (with the tacit blessing of Riyadh) of assassinating its nuclear scientists, launching sophisticated cyber attacks aimed at crippling its ability to enrich uranium, and funding anti-Iranian terrorist groups like Jundallah.⁵⁶² Besides targeting Israeli diplomats and embassies abroad, Iranian nationals and Hizballah members were implicated in a foiled assassination plot that involved hiring Mexican gang members to kill the Saudi ambassador to Washington.⁵⁶³ From a conventional military standpoint, Iran is limited in what it can do to strike back at its adversaries, so many observers believe this will lead Tehran to continue fund Hizballah to provide it with the operational ability to strike on Iran’s behalf.⁵⁶⁴

Unlike other groups that need to spend precious time and energy figuring out how to finance their day-to-day operations, Hizballah enjoys the benefits of foreign patronage, which allow its members to focus on fundraising in other arenas, including expatriate remittances, front companies located both within Lebanon and abroad (primarily in Africa, Latin America, and Asia) and various forms of crime ranging from cigarette smuggling to film piracy to credit card fraud. Indeed, sustaining the organization’s ever-growing legitimate portfolio makes its criminal activities that much more critical.

⁵⁶¹ For more on this so-called ‘shadow war,’ see Yaakov Katz and Yoaz Hendel, *Israel vs. Iran: The Shadow War*, Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012.

⁵⁶² Seymour Hersh, “Iran and the Bomb,” *The New Yorker*, June 6, 2011; on Jundallah, see William Lowther and Colin Freeman, “US Fund Terror Group to Sow Chaos in Iran,” *The Telegraph*, February 25, 2007.

⁵⁶³ Charlie Savage, “Iranians Accused of a Plot to Kill Saudis’ U.S. Envoy,” *New York Times*, October 11, 2011.

⁵⁶⁴ Daniel Byman, “The Lebanese Hizballah and Israeli Counterterrorism,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.34, Iss.12, p.936. Byman provides an even more detailed and thorough analysis of Israeli COIN force efforts against Hizballah in *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

The group has also been accused of dealing in more pernicious forms of crime, like the trade in conflict diamonds and narcotics smuggling. In 2011, an investigation into the Lebanese Canadian Bank revealed that Hizballah maintained extensive ties to the South American cocaine trade. The Lebanese Canadian Bank helped the Shiite terrorist group launder its profits from cocaine trafficking by mixing drug proceeds from money earned through the sale of used cars, purchased in the United States and resold in Africa.⁵⁶⁵

In the case of Hizballah, the group still has not reached a tipping point toward negotiations. This can best be summarized by examining the parallel growth of Hizballah's two wings, the political and the military. In contrast to the PIRA, whose two wings were characterized by an inverse relationship (as Sinn Fein grew in prominence, the Army Council faded), "Hizballah's restricted but constant war against Israel indicated that its political military and political wings had developed in parallel, attempting to promote a public image of two separate identities while both remained under the control of the same leaders."⁵⁶⁶

Hizballah's insurgency is so complex because it is actually two separate insurgencies. The domestic insurgency within Lebanon continues, while the insurgency against the Israeli state, which Hizballah justifies by citing Israel's occupation of the Shebaa Farms, is mostly dormant, but punctuated by spates of violence. The group maintains an aggressive posture toward Israel because it is popular within Lebanon. The continuing insurgency against Tel Aviv is critical to Hizballah's legitimacy within Lebanon and its status as a resistance force (this is also one of the primary reason why Hizballah can avoid disarmament). It is the combination of Hizballah's claim as a resistance force coupled with the legitimacy it derives from social welfare

⁵⁶⁵ Jo Becker, "Beirut Bank Seen as a Hub of Hezbollah's Financing," *New York Times*, December 13, 2011.

⁵⁶⁶ Berti, "Armed Groups as Political Parties: Hizballah," p.953.

that “provide it with enough justification among the populace, that the populace (in the South) is willing to tolerate (or even see as a reasonable situation) Lebanese Hizballah as a quasi-governmental organization, grafted onto the Government of Lebanon, that retains its arms.”⁵⁶⁷

Hizballah is hybrid organization involved in both politics and terrorism and as Matthew Levitt has pointed out, so long as the international community fails to raise the cost to Hizballah for continuing to exist as such, “why would they ever give up violence so long as it helps them politically (aside from any ideological commitment to violence, which there is as well)?”⁵⁶⁸

With a group like Hizballah, there are no easy answers, just difficult questions. Because it is able to maintain its arsenal while also functioning as a “deeply embedded political party” and an “integral part of the political system,” the group “confounds simple stereotypes and classifications.”⁵⁶⁹ “The Party of God” boasts an arsenal of 40,000 missiles and enjoys veto power as a full partner in Lebanon’s coalition government.⁵⁷⁰ The paradox of Hizballah is that it thrives as both a political party *and* an insurgent group, not a political party *or* an insurgent group, yet many observers still fail to conceptualize it as the former. This problem of categorization makes crafting concrete policy recommendations more complex.

⁵⁶⁷ Author email exchange with Alexis Grynkeiwich, January 25, 2012.

⁵⁶⁸ Author email exchange with Dr. Matthew Levitt, November 2, 2011.

⁵⁶⁹ Augustus Richard Norton, “The Role of Hizballah in Lebanese Domestic Politics,” *The International Spectator*, Vol.42, No.4, December 2007, p.475.

⁵⁷⁰ Thanassis Cambanis, “Stronger Hezbollah Emboldened for Fights Ahead,” *New York Times*, October 6, 2010.

Table 2: Hizballah Analytic Framework Summary Analysis

Operational Tools

Training	Hizballah has received elite-level training from the IRGC since the early 1980s, which has transformed the group from a militia into an army. Hizballah's military wing poses issues for disarmament and future integration into the LAF, making negotiations difficult.
Intelligence	After spending two decades battling the IDF and SLA in southern Lebanon, Hizballah's intelligence apparatus experienced firsthand a sapping IDF morale. Negotiating an end to the ongoing conflict with Israel seems unlikely since Hizballah already perceives its adversary as lacking commitment.
Weapons	At the present time, Hizballah's weaponry remains one of the group's greatest strengths. Still, since the majority of its arsenal is paid for and supplied by Iran, this remains a source of potential future vulnerability for Hizballah.

Organizational Tools

Command & Control	With a support base of between 20,000-25,000 individuals, Hizballah's infrastructure provides it with a robust constituency. Its social services wing, combined with a legion of loyal supporters, ensures the group's legitimacy, which in turn provides it with leverage.
Group Composition	The leadership is influenced by a conservative, hardline element within Iran's ruling circle. While Nasrallah has displayed a pragmatic streak and would likely negotiate within Lebanon, any chance of a Lebanese-Israeli détente is slim with Hizballah's leadership involved in the decisionmaking.
Ideology	Hizballah's ideological flexibility bodes well for the prospects of further political compromise on the part of the organization.
Popular Support	At the time of this writing, Hizballah's popular support in Lebanon and throughout the Arab world is higher than ever. Following the 2006 battle with Israel, Hizballah's social service wing helped rebuild the Shia slums of South Beirut and southern Lebanon.
Propaganda	Al-Manar, Hizballah's sophisticated media arm, uses propaganda to denounce Israel. This has the effect of prolonging the conflict by hardening attitudes on both sides are reinforcing the idea that negotiations with the 'Zionist-Crusader' alliance is apostasy.

Strategic Decision Making

Goals	Hizballah's goals have undergone a substantial evolution from the time of the group's 'Open Letter' in 1985. The group's leadership has come to terms with the reality that due to Lebanon's ethnic and religious diversity, achieving an Islamic state is unrealistic. It now seeks to consolidate political power.
Seminal Events	The death of Khomeini in 1989 was initially greeted with optimism by those advocating for Hizballah to disarm and become a non-violent party in the Lebanese landscape, although these observers were soon disappointed. The 2006 conflagration with Israel makes the chances of negotiations extremely unlikely.
Previous attempts at conflict resolution	The Taif Accords ended the civil war and put Hizballah on an equal footing with Lebanon's other politico-military organizations. Negotiations over the Golan Heights have served as a stumbling block to progress between Hizballah and Syria and will likely continue to be so even if the Assad regime falls.
Mutually hurting stalemate	The Lebanese consociational political system and Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000 are emblematic of Hizballah's overlapping insurgencies.
Decision-making structure & process	Hizballah's decision-making structure and process represents the clearest indication that an end to the domestic insurgency is likely. If Hizballah does become more closely integrated with the Lebanese state, this is also a positive sign for an eventual negotiation with Israel, including possible recognition of Tel Aviv.

4.0 LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM (LTTE)

4.1 BRIEF HISTORY/BACKGROUND

British Ceylon gained independence in 1948 and has been known as Sri Lanka since 1972. Sri Lanka has a population of 18 million people, the majority of whom are ethnic Sinhalese (74 percent). Another 18 percent of the population is Sri Lankan Tamil (6 percent of whom are Upcountry or “Estate Tamils”) who are primarily Hindu, while another 7 percent are Tamil Muslims. The remaining population, less than 1 percent, is comprised of small numbers of Sinhala Christians, Anglo-Sri Lankans, and descendants of European settlers.⁵⁷¹

The conflict between Sinhalese Buddhists and Tamil Hindus initially stemmed from differences in tradition, heritage, language, religion, and color and the fact that Sri Lankan Tamils were highly educated and thus represented disproportionately in commerce, professional

⁵⁷¹ Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War & Reconciliation*, Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005, p.4. A 2001 census notes that Sri Lanka’s main ethnic populations are Sinhalese (82 percent), Tamil (9.4 percent), and Sri Lanka Moor (7.9 percent). Jayshree Bajoria, Council on Foreign Relations Backgrounder: The Sri Lankan Conflict, 18 May 2009.

opportunities and government service. Due largely to their superior numbers, the Sinhalese were politically more powerful than the Tamils and beginning in the 1950s, began to discriminate against Tamils in areas including education, religion, and language. K.M de Silva, a Sri Lankan historian, observes, “the Sinhala have sometimes thought of themselves as a chosen people with a providential mission, who are for that reason entitled to cultural, linguistic, and political supremacy in Sri Lanka.”⁵⁷² This discrimination was accompanied by a rise in Sinhala nationalism, which grew stronger even as Tamil leverage was further reduced. Four main factors can be traced to the rise of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka following independence in 1948: a backlash against British Colonialism, the material conditions associated with nationalism (these included communication, transportation, industrial production, mass markets and mass politics, general systems of public educations, and a Weberian bureaucratic component with administrative structures designed to support standardized mass society),⁵⁷³ perceptions of an antiquated and inequitable distribution of resources and positions (especially in the government), and a desire to exercise majoritarian rule with all the benefits this type of government afforded.⁵⁷⁴

The Tamil insurgency began in earnest when violence erupted in northern Sri Lanka in the early 1970s. Several Jaffna politicians were targeted for assassination and in 1974 a common criminal by the name of Chetti Tanabalasingham founded the Tamil New Tigers (TNT).⁵⁷⁵ To counter intimidation of the Tamil minority in a highly polarized society, the Tamil United

⁵⁷² Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p. 43.

⁵⁷³ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.47.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., pp.44-50.

⁵⁷⁵ Rohan Gunaratna, “International and Regional Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency,” 2 December 1998, available online at <http://212.150.54.123/articles/articleDet.cfm?articleid=57>, site accessed May 29, 2012.

Liberation Front (TULF) emerged in 1976 amidst calls for a separate Tamil state. Two years later, a small group of hardcore Tamils broke off from TULF to form a separate Tamil organization— the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were born.⁵⁷⁶

4.1.1 Operating Logic

The Tamil Tigers can accurately be described as an ethno-nationalist insurgent group that fought for secession from the state of Sri Lanka. The LTTE sought to establish an independent Tamil state in northeastern Sri Lanka, where the majority of Sri Lanka's Tamils live. Sri Lanka's long legacy of colonialism invited both Portuguese and Dutch influence and following 150 years of British rule, the government was unable to peacefully manage the ethnic differences that were exposed following independence in 1948. Gradually, over the next several decades, the Sri Lankan government rolled back Tamil rights and reasserted the power of the Sinhalese majority. It was the combination of majoritarian rule and exclusivist ethnic policies of the Sri Lankan state through the 1960s and 1970s that gave rise to the Tamil separatist ideology.⁵⁷⁷

Between the late 1970s and early 1980s, a coherent, militarized Tamil insurgency had formed and consisted of several groups. In addition to the LTTE, these groups included: the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), the People's Liberation Organization for Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Tamil Liberation Front (precursor of the Tamil Liberation Organization, or

⁵⁷⁶ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.7.

⁵⁷⁷ Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1998, p.198.

TLO⁵⁷⁸) and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF).⁵⁷⁹ Through a combination of violence and coercion, the LTTE consolidated control over these other organizations and "established itself as the principal and most lethal voice of militant Tamil aspirations."⁵⁸⁰

In the earliest stages of the conflict, the COIN forces of the government in Colombo were completely unprepared to deal with an insurgency. The Sri Lankan armed forces were more of a "parade force" than a military. The Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) had no combat experience and barely any concept of how to wage a successful counterinsurgency campaign against a well-disciplined and motivated insurgent group. Since the Tamils effectively controlled the Jaffna peninsula in the northeast of the country, the LTTE had a home base from which it could train, plan, and execute attacks against the military. Furthermore, across the Palk Straits in Tamil Nadu, India, the LTTE was able to rely on the support—both active and passive—of thousands of ethnic Tamils who sympathized with the group.

In July 1983, the LTTE slaughtered thirteen government soldiers, prompting sectarian rioting and ethnic conflict throughout the country. Over 300 Tamils were killed/died violently during the riots.⁵⁸¹ This marked the beginning of civil war in Sri Lanka. Following the riots, 125,000 Tamils who had been living in southern Sri Lanka relocated to the predominantly Tamil north of the country, while 5,000 Sinhalese Sri Lankans departed the Jaffna peninsula and

⁵⁷⁸ The TLO originated in London in the mid-1970s and is distinct from the TELO. Gunaratna, "International and Regional Implications."

⁵⁷⁹ C. Christine Fair, "Diaspora Involvement in Insurgencies: Insights from the Khalistan and Tamil Eelam Movements," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 11, No. 1, Spring 2005, p.138.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Cecile Van de Voorde, "Sri Lankan Terrorism: Assessing and Responding to the Threat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," *Police Practice and Research*, Vol.6, Iss.2, 2005, p.184.

resettled in the south.⁵⁸² Tens of thousands of Tamils fled the country altogether and moved to Tamil Nadu.

4.1.2 Type of Insurgency

The insurgency in Sri Lanka is an example of a “Local-International” insurgency. Geopolitics shaped the relationship between India, a capricious supporter of the LTTE, and Sri Lanka, a country that maintained good relations with Pakistan and China and was perceived by the Indians as abandoning New Delhi’s non-aligned movement through Colombo’s ties to the West. The Tamil diaspora played a major role in financing the LTTE, running its global arms procurement network, and establishing a sophisticated propaganda wing that framed the struggle in terms favorable to the Tigers’ goal of an independent Tamil Eelam. The LTTE maintained extensive contacts with other insurgent groups throughout the globe. Yet even though the international dimension of the conflict played a significant role in the Tamil insurgency, the outcome was ultimately decided by local factors and local forces. Tamil nationalism remained germane to the Tamil ethnic group and never became part of global struggle. On a regional scale, Tamil ambitions were relegated to Tamil Nadu in southern India.

4.1.3 Approach

The Tamil Tigers were an adaptive and innovative insurgent organization that evolved over time and learned to fight as both a guerilla group and a conventional military. Proficient in a range of tactics and comfortable fighting in jungles, urban centers, or on sea, the LTTE pioneered the use

⁵⁸² Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Crisis*, p.199.

of suicide terrorism and assassinated heads of state with relative impunity. Velupillai Prabhakaran consolidated control over the LTTE and molded it into the pre-eminent Tamil insurgent group. Along the way, he spearheaded a campaign to marginalize or outright eliminate any rivals to the group. The group's domestic and international capabilities mutually reinforced each other and grew to include a global arms procurement network and a sophisticated fundraising arm that blended licit and illicit businesses along with money laundering operations that facilitated the group's activities.

The Tigers have routinely been anointed by many COIN experts and scholars as the most comprehensive, lethal insurgent force in history. The group skillfully combined low intensity guerilla warfare with conventional capabilities, including the asymmetric use of suicide bombing and highly effective maritime operations, all bolstered by a robust diaspora network ready and willing to supply funds and arms at a moment's notice. The LTTE fought in the jungles and in the cities while it pursued a Maoist strategy in the quest for an independent Tamil homeland.⁵⁸³ The first phase of the insurgency established base areas where hard-core members of the movement mobilized supporters. Following a second phase of terrorism and assassinations, the LTTE incorporated more conventional operations designed to inflict severe pain on the Sri Lankan government forces and convince Colombo's politicians that not only was the war not winnable, but it was no longer worth fighting. Cease-fires by the insurgents were only accepted when the Tigers needed an opportunity to rest, recuperate, and prepare to reengage.

The fundraising effort organized by Sivaganam Gopalarathinam, afforded the LTTE the ability to develop its military wing into the most comprehensive guerilla force in history,

⁵⁸³ Paul A. Povlock, "A Guerilla War at Sea: The Sri Lankan Civil War," *Small Wars Journal*, 9 September 2011, p.16.

complete with an air force (the Air Tigers), a navy (the Sea Tigers), a suicide commando unit (Black Tigers), an intelligence group, and an elite fighting wing known as the Charles Anthony Regiment.

4.2 OPERATIONAL TOOLS

LTTE operational tools included weapons, sanctuary, and funding, pitted squarely against a Sri Lankan COIN force that waged a take-no-prisoner war to exterminate Prabhakaran and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

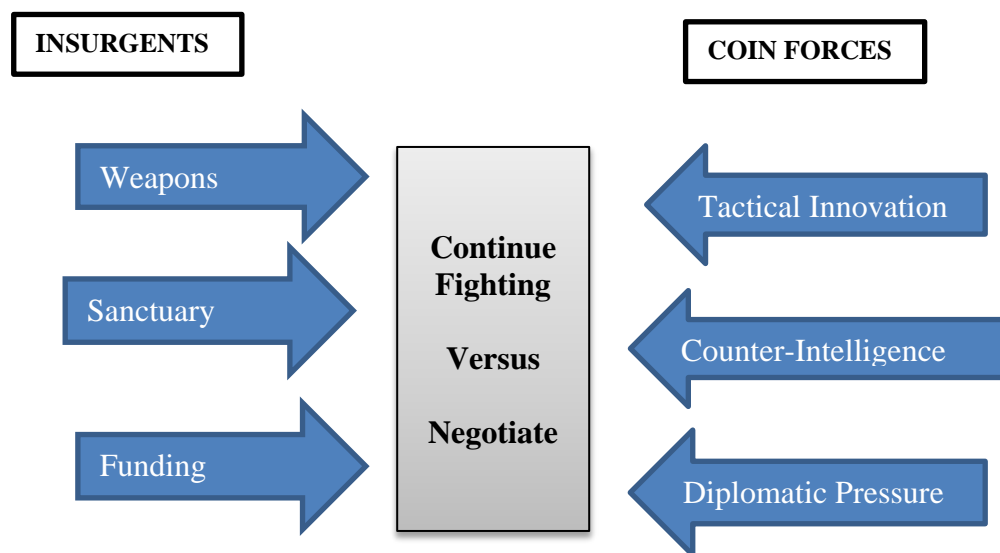


Figure 11: LTTE Force Field

4.2.1 Weapons/Ammunition

The LTTE's weapons procurement network has been called the "most secretive" of the group's international operations.⁵⁸⁴ The earliest identified network was run by Sothilingam Shanthakumar, a smuggler from the Velvettiturai (VVT), a fishing port that serves as the base for a distinct caste of Tamil fishermen.⁵⁸⁵ Until 1987, the LTTE relied almost exclusively on the Indian intelligence services, especially the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) to provide arms and explosives.⁵⁸⁶ From 1987 onward, following the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord, the LTTE sought to diversify its source of weapons and made the establishment of a global procurement network one of its top priorities. The Tamil Tigers also used explosives to establish themselves as one of the most feared insurgent groups in the world, known for their extensive use of suicide bombing. Finally, the group developed legitimate air and sea capabilities to complement its ground forces, thus rounding the organization into a comprehensive military threat.

4.2.1.1 Why were weapons/ammunition such a valuable resource?

Diversification of Weapons and Weapons Sources

In any insurgency, diversifying the source of a group's weapons is critical, as the LTTE learned in 1987 when the Indians withdrew their sponsorship. Per the terms of the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord, the Indian government agreed to cease its support for the Tigers by cutting off the

⁵⁸⁴ Byman, *Outside Support*, "Appendix B: The LTTE's Military-Related Procurement," p.117.

⁵⁸⁵ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.32.

⁵⁸⁶ Byman, *Outside Support*, "Appendix B: The LTTE's Military-Related Procurement," p.117.

arms pipeline. The importance of diversification was even more apparent following the downfall of one of the LTTE's main rivals, the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). PLOTE was crippled when a shipment of weapons destined for the group was intercepted in Madras and the group's leaders forfeited a \$300,000 down payment already paid to the Palestinian group al-Fatah.⁵⁸⁷ Keen not to suffer a similar fate, the LTTE developed contacts abroad, and soon engaged in procurement activities in Northeastern and Southeastern Asia (especially China, North Korea, Cambodia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Burma), Southwest Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan), former Soviet Republics (primarily Ukraine), Southeast Europe and the Balkans (Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus), the Middle East (Turkey, Lebanon), and Africa (Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and South Africa).⁵⁸⁸

The South African connection proved particularly fruitful for the Tigers. Situated between the active arms markets of Mozambique and Angola, weapons dealers in South Africa provided the LTTE with consistent access to a steady supply of small arms.⁵⁸⁹ Furthermore, South Africa maintained a fairly robust communications and transportation infrastructure, which made it an attractive location for illicit activity.⁵⁹⁰ For most of the 1990s, the Tigers used Burma as a logistical hub but later moved the bulk of their operations to Bangkok. Thailand's

⁵⁸⁷ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.32.

⁵⁸⁸ Van de Voorde, "Sri Lankan Terrorism."

⁵⁸⁹ Both Mozambique and Angola experienced serial insurgencies during this period. In Mozambique, separate insurgencies occurred in 1962-1974 and 1976-1995. In Angola, serial insurgencies wracked that country from 1962-1974 and from 1975-2002.

⁵⁹⁰ Peter Chalk, "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Insurgency in Sri Lanka," in Rajat Ganguly and Ian MacDuff, *Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism in South and Southeast Asia*, London: Sage, 2003, p.143.

geography, established international business presence, and easily corrupted security officials made it an ideal choice for the LTTE's logistical hub.⁵⁹¹

From the post-Cold War arms bazaars in Beirut and Peshawar, and especially those in Cambodia, Burma, and Afghanistan, the insurgents acquired rapid-fire pistols, assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and surface-to-air missiles. Ammunition needs were met through intermediaries in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, and North Korea, which supplied mortar, artillery, and 12.7 mm machine gun rounds.⁵⁹² Occasionally, as it did in Mullaithiu in 1996, the LTTE would raid Sri Lankan military bases and steal whatever weapons were available. The Mullaithiu raid proved extremely bountiful, as the insurgents acquired multi-barrel rocket launchers (MBRLs), T69-1 RPG launchers, artillery batteries (122mm, 130 mm, 152mm), various mortars (120 mm, 106mm, 81mm, and 60mm) and an array of anti-armor and anti-aircraft systems, to include W-85 anti-aircraft guns.⁵⁹³ Finally, the group rounded out its arsenal through the procurement of explosives from suppliers in the Ukraine and Croatia.⁵⁹⁴

The LTTE's procurement network was led by Tharmalingham Shunmugham, alias Kumaran Pathmanathan and known in shorthand simply as "KP." He was so closely associated with the Tigers' arms network that their global weapons operations were referred to as the "KP Department."⁵⁹⁵ The "KP Department" prioritized the acquisition of explosives, but unlike the PIRA, the LTTE was not adept at producing these indigenously. In August 1994, the "KP

⁵⁹¹ Byman, *Outside Support*, "Appendix B: The LTTE's Military-Related Procurement," p. 121.

⁵⁹² Ibid, p.120.

⁵⁹³ IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Byman, *Outside Support*, "Appendix B: The LTTE's Military-Related Procurement," p.119.

Department” arranged for the shipment of between 50-60 tons of RDX and TNT explosive acquired through the Rubezone Chemicals plant and sent from the Port of Kikoleyev in Ukraine to Sri Lanka. The deal was brokered through an LTTE front company known as Carlton Trading, which was based in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and facilitated through the use of false end-user certificates.⁵⁹⁶ Other front companies were set up in Chittagong, Rangoon, and Kuala Lumpur.⁵⁹⁷

The LTTE’s weapons inventory, in addition to the arms and equipment listed above, also included a T-55 tank, Russian-made Strela-3 manportable air defense systems (MANPADS), six Czech built Zlin Z-143 single-engine aircraft, 50 to 100 frogman kits and five to 10 underwater scooters, a fleet of 500 to 1,000 fiberglass boats, between six and 10 Mirage-class boats, and four partially completed submersibles.⁵⁹⁸ The insurgents used GPS systems to more accurately deploy their missile projectiles well before the COIN force acquired this same capability.⁵⁹⁹

Such an extensive arsenal gave the LTTE the flexibility to fight as guerillas, or if it chose, to battle SLAF COIN forces in more conventional warfare. Most insurgent groups engage in asymmetric conflict because it is their only option. But the LTTE was one of the most dynamic groups in history, partly due to its ability to fight in a number of ways. An evaluation of the LTTE’s military capabilities by Jane’s supports this assessment:

“At its peak, prior to the 2008-2009 SLA offensive, the LTTE had successfully developed and implemented an impressive range of conventional and non-conventional tactics, and was able to routinely strike at a wide range of different targets. The group earned a reputation for its mastery of conventional, land-based

⁵⁹⁶ Chalk, “LTTE in Sri Lanka,” p.144.

⁵⁹⁷ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.33.

⁵⁹⁸ IHS Jane’s World Terrorism and Insurgency, “Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam.”

⁵⁹⁹ Lionel Beecher, “What Sri Lanka Can Teach Us about COIN,” *Small Wars Journal*, August 27, 2010, p.3.

warfighting, regularly deploying its battle-hardened cadres against heavily fortified military targets. Such operations frequently showcased the LTTE's ability to coordinate direct and indirect fire, and on occasion LTTE ground forces even mounted combined arms operations together with the group's naval and air wings. Unusually for a sub-state group, the LTTE was able to supplement its mastery of manoeuvre warfare with an effective use of positional warfare."⁶⁰⁰

Links to Other Insurgent and Terrorist Groups

The LTTE's efforts to procure weapons and establish a global arms network brought it in contact with several other insurgent and terrorist groups. In addition to Khalistan-oriented Sikh insurgents, Kashmiri *mujahedin*, and Middle Eastern militants, the Tigers forged links with over 20 separate Tamil Nadu separatist groups.⁶⁰¹ While many of these relationships were temporary and tactical, more an example of strategic cooperation than a long-standing relationship, others proved durable and resulted in considerable tacit knowledge transfer. Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) insurgents were trained by LTTE Sea Tiger officers in seaborne suicide tactics in Indonesia.⁶⁰² Technological exchange occurred with Indian insurgent groups such as the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War, also known as the Andhara Peoples War Group, or PWG.⁶⁰³ When PWG member Marepalli

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ These groups include The Tamil National Retrieval Force, People's War Group, Liberation Cuckoos, Peasants and People Party, MGF Anna Dravida Munethra Kalaham of Thirunavakarasu, Tamil National Movement of Nedumaran, Indian People's Party, Center for the Campaign of Tamil Education, Thaliai Nagar Tamil Society, Movement of the Educated Front, Tamil Nadu People's Movement, Thileepan Society, People's Education Center, Tamil Nadu Socialist Party, Republic Party of India, People's Democratic Youth Front, Liberation Organization of the Oppressed People, World People's Progressive Front, Human Rights Organization, Organization for Social History, and the Marxist Periyar Socialist Party. Van de Voorde, "Sri Lankan Terrorism," p.192.

⁶⁰² IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁶⁰³ Gunaratna, International and Regional Implications."

Basavaraju was apprehended by the Indian government he admitted that his group had received explosives training from an LTTE expert in land mine technology.⁶⁰⁴

The Sea Pigeons have allegedly served as an intermediary between insurgent groups and have transported arms to the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) on behalf of Harakat-al Muhahideen, a Pakistani militant group linked to Al-Qaida.⁶⁰⁵ Though the group became wary of associating with Al-Qaida or Al-Qaida affiliated groups following the attacks of September 11th, the LTTE continued to train divisional commanders of the Communist Party of Nepal- Maoist (CPN-M).⁶⁰⁶ Other insurgent groups known to commiserate with the LTTE at various times during its existence include the Revolutionary Armed Forces Colombia (FARC), the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Ethiopia, Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) in Afghanistan, the Japanese Red Army (JRA), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).⁶⁰⁷

Linkages with a smorgasbord of insurgent groups allowed the LTTE to circumvent existing international arms control conventions and add to an already potent arsenal. The LTTE's relationship with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia was integral to its ability to obtain weapons. These deals took place across the Cambodian border in Trang, Thailand, where the

⁶⁰⁴ Manoj Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.19, Iss.1, 1996, p.33.

⁶⁰⁵ Gordon Weiss, *The Cage: The Fight for Sri Lanka and the Last Days of the Tamil Tigers*, London: Bodley Head, 2011, p.88.

⁶⁰⁶ IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁶⁰⁷ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.33.

weapons would be purchased and then moved along the Andaman sea coast, where they were shipped across the Bay of Bengal to LTTE insurgents in Sri Lanka.⁶⁰⁸

Not only does the Sri Lankan diaspora play a vital role in this operation, but so does the group's extensive human trafficking network. Other dimensions of the LTTE's criminal enterprise, which is detailed at length in the section on group composition, also enable weapons procurement by putting the group's members in touch with a wide range of nefarious individuals, including arms dealers, weapons brokers, and intermediaries. According to Peter Chalk, the Tigers acquired US Stinger-class missiles from the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in 1996 and used these weapons to shoot down a Sri Lankan civilian *Lionair* jet in 1998.⁶⁰⁹ Several years earlier, in April 1995, the LTTE shot down two Avro transport aircraft of the Sri Lankan Air Force, killing everyone on board. This was the first known use of missiles by the insurgents and observers argue that the introduction of missiles changed the dynamics of the conflict from that point forward.⁶¹⁰

Assassinations

The LTTE developed the capability to assassinate Sri Lankan government officials, foreign officials, and high-ranking members of the COIN force military services. When the LTTE wanted to renege on a peace agreement, the group commonly used assassination of a top Sri Lankan official to convey this message clearly.

⁶⁰⁸ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.33.

⁶⁰⁹ Chalk, "LTTE in Sri Lanka," p.144.

⁶¹⁰ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.37.

Table 3: Major LTTE Assassinations

Name	Title	Date
General Ranjan Wileratne	Minister of Defense	March 1991
Denzil Kobbekaduwa	Army general	August 1992
Wijaya Wimlaratna	Army general	August 1992
Lakshman Wijeratna	Army general	August 1992
Clancy Fernando	Navy commander	November 1992
Lalith Athulathmudali	Former national security minister	April 1993

4.2.1.2 How did it change over time?

Before 1987, the Tigers mainly obtained weaponry from four distinct sources: Afghanistan, external sources in India, indigenous production, and munitions captured from the Sri Lankan military.⁶¹¹ While weapons had always been important to the LTTE, the onus to develop a truly comprehensive military capability became more pronounced when the Sri Lankan government began upgrading its armed forces in the mid-1990s in an effort to gain a qualitative advantage over the insurgents. Between 1995 and 1996, Sri Lankan defense spending increased by nearly one third.⁶¹² F-7M Airguards were purchased from China, Kfir fighters from Israel, and Mi-24 Hind-D helicopter gunships from Ukraine. By 1998, the defense budget had ballooned to a whopping \$880 million, elevating the direct cost of the war to an estimated \$5.2 billion.⁶¹³ Although the insurgents had utilized guerilla tactics to devastating effect against the COIN force, the LTTE realized that to stave off defeat, it had to counter Colombo's moves by enhancing its

⁶¹¹ Chalk, "LTTE, No.77."

⁶¹² Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.34.

⁶¹³ Ibid.

capabilities and upgrading its infrastructure. As part of its efforts to innovate in the area of weapons technology intended to blunt COIN force countermeasures, the LTTE diverted resources to its two operational wings that functioned as suicide strike teams, the Black Tigers (BTs) and the Sea Tigers (STs).

Table 4: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Technological Innovations⁶¹⁴

Innovation	Purpose	Intended Mitigation of Government Countermeasures
Wax-coated wiring in explosive devices	Prevent emission of explosive vapors	Defeat detection by sniffer dogs
Airtight casing for explosive devices	Prevent emission of explosive vapors	Defeat detection by sniffer dogs
LED indicator lamps in bomb circuits	Verify “live” circuitry	
Secondary, tertiary detonation triggers in explosive devices	Provision of internal fail-safe mechanism	
“Explosive bra cup” design for suicide vest	Conceal explosive slabs	Defeat physical hand searches
Elongated fuel tank in vehicle bombs	Conceal explosive devices	Defeat detection by “dipper” probes
Chassis molded, mint-laced explosive devices	Conceal explosive charge and prevent emission of explosive vapors	Defeat causal visual inspections and detection by sniffer dogs
Hollowed out, shallow superstructure for suicide boats	Increase speed and reduce surface detection	Minimize radar cross-section
Penetration rods affixed to suicide boat prows	Amplify explosive force	Defeat hardened SLN superstructures
Mini submarines for diver operatives	Covert de-bussing inside harbors	Defeat port harbor patrols
Prepaid SIM cards, single satellite signals for communication devices	Avail secure communication	Defeat government communication intercepts
Discursive writing, Slidex chart for coding communications	Avail secure communication	Defeat government counterintelligence

⁶¹⁴ Jackson, *Breaching the Fortress Wall*, p.80.

4.2.2 Sanctuary

Sanctuary proved indispensable to the Tigers for four principal reasons. First, the Tamil diaspora provided the LTTE with virtually a global sanctuary. Second, the physical sanctuary maintained in Sri Lanka's Northeast, particularly Jaffna, allowed the insurgents to train without fear of COIN force infiltration. For years, a sympathetic Tamil population and government in Tamil Nadu, India (located a mere twenty-eight kilometers across the Palk Strait and home to 60 million ethnic Tamils) acquiesced to the LTTE's need for a physical foreign safe haven. The Tamil Nadu sanctuary was facilitated by the relationship between Prabhakaran and P. Nedumaran, a senior politician in India. Tamil Nadu demonstrates that for sanctuary to be valuable, it need not be geographically contiguous. Third, sanctuary became a de facto headquarters for the LTTE and a place where the group established a system of governance to rival that of the Sri Lankan state. It also prolonged the duration of the conflict because it allowed insurgents to evade arrest and offered the Tigers a secure area to rest, recuperate, replenish, and rearm. Some scholars argue that Prabhakaran was too much of an ideologue to ever seriously consider a negotiated settlement with the Sri Lankan government. Instead, he and his group reaped the benefits of several cease-fires to reorganize for the next offensive.

4.2.2.1 Why was sanctuary such a valuable resource?

Training & Logistics

By mid-1987, approximately 20,000 Tamil militants had been trained in India, which included camps in Tamil Nadu, as well as specialized training which occurred in New Delhi, Bombay, and

Vishakhapatnam.⁶¹⁵ In addition to these locations the Tigers received training in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka and established camps in Salem and Madurai.⁶¹⁶ For the majority of the conflict, the most promising insurgents were sent for training outside of Sri Lanka's borders, while the rest were trained in camps located in the forested areas of the north.⁶¹⁷

The average training cycle for an LTTE recruit lasted approximately four months. Those insurgents who displayed skill or advanced military acumen were handpicked to attend specialized training courses to prepare for task-specific roles in the group's intelligence, communication, explosives, or naval components.⁶¹⁸ In 1994, the LTTE implemented a training school designed specifically for 'officers,' which included a rigorous curriculum that incorporated lessons learned from previous battles against the COIN forces. In the realm of intelligence, the LTTE trained specialized members for each phase of the intelligence cycle, including a cadre of insurgents whose only job was the collection and analysis of long-term intelligence on both potential and real targets.⁶¹⁹

Tamil Nadu was critical to the LTTE's longevity and the group even managed to train and operate there while fighting the IPKF in the late 1980s, primarily due to a combination of

⁶¹⁵ According to Chalk, the most specialized training was conducted at Chakrata, India's elite military academy. Here, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) trainers worked with a range of insurgent groups, including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Tibetan dissidents. Chalk, "LTTE in Sri Lanka," p.131.

⁶¹⁶ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.23.

⁶¹⁷ Tamil militant groups trained in the Middle East in the 1980s and beginning in the 1990s, small numbers of insurgents were trained in underwater sabotage techniques in camps located in Thailand by former Norwegian naval instructors. Other insurgents received training in Sudan to learn how to use global positioning systems (GPS) while member of South Africa's African National Congress imparted lessons to LTTE cadres on the political element of insurgency. IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁶¹⁸ IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁶¹⁹ Kevin A. O'Brien, "Assessing Hostile Reconnaissance and Terrorist Intelligence Activities: The Case for a Counter Strategy," *RUSI Journal* 153, October 2008, p.53.

popular support among the locals, government apathy, and “cynical bureaucratic ploys of the intelligence agencies.”⁶²⁰ The LTTE’s tentacles extended deep into Tamil Nadu. They constructed a dense network in the Thanjavur district between Nagapattinam and Adirapattinam, Vedaranyam, and Point Calimere. The local administration was co-opted or subverted, among them police and politicians. Fishermen, farmers, and smugglers served as the manpower for an ever-growing sanctuary.

A highly sympathetic population was a contributing factor to the LTTE’s ability to achieve so much success in using Tamil Nadu and other Indian areas as sanctuary, although the Jaffna peninsula in Sri Lanka proper was unmatched in value. The Tigers so thoroughly controlled the Northeast of the country at various points throughout the conflict that they were able to build mock ups of the actual venues they planned to attack. The map and models department within the group constructed these real-life models.⁶²¹ Some of the more devastating attacks ever conducted by the group—international airport, World Trade Center, Central Bank—resulted from this type of training.⁶²²

Administration of a “State Within a State”

For those insurgents who needed a hiatus from fighting in Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu was an ideal destination, especially for those fighters whose absence from the conflict would only be temporary. As early as the 1970s, Tamil militants, including Prabakharan, evaded arrest for

⁶²⁰ Joshi, “On the Razor’s Edge,” p.26. For details on the activities conducted by Indian intelligence services during this period, see Anirudhya Mitra, “Rajiv Assassination: Conspiracy Surfaces” *India Today*, 15 December 1992, pp.57-60.

⁶²¹ IHS Jane’s World Terrorism and Insurgency, “Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam.”

⁶²² Interview with Peter Chalk, November 14, 2011.

crimes by fleeing to Tamil Nadu.⁶²³ The LTTE purchased safe houses and communication centers in Tamil Nadu where militants on the lam and attempting to evade capture could hide, without removing themselves too acutely from the battlefield. Besides safe houses, the insurgents used factories to manufacture uniforms and weapons.⁶²⁴ There were even hospitals run by the insurgents that were used to treat wounded fighters.

As they solidified control over the northern and eastern Tamil-dominated provinces of Sri Lanka, the LTTE used these areas to build an extensive network of bases and defensive fortifications.⁶²⁵ The group's unofficial headquarters was located in the town of Killinochchi in Northern Province, located approximately 100km southeast of Jaffna. By establishing a de facto shadow government in the north and east of the country, the LTTE gained legitimacy at the expense of the Sri Lankan state.

Since the ultimate prize for insurgents is control of the state, constructing a shadow government is a necessary pre-requisite. The LTTE's sanctuary afforded the Tigers with the opportunity to build a parallel system of government in the areas under their control. In many parts of the north and east, this included courts of law, municipal administration, a police force, a customs service, a tax and legislation code, a banking system, and a television and radio network (this will be discussed in greater detail in the section on media and public relations).⁶²⁶ During long stretches of the conflict, traveling from government-controlled areas to Tiger redoubts required passing through well-guarded border control posts that include identification checks,

⁶²³ Gunaratna, "International and Regional Implications."

⁶²⁴ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.27

⁶²⁵ IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁶²⁶ Weiss, *The Cage*, p.8.

goods inspection, and the collection of customs fees.⁶²⁷

Military Infrastructure

Following the ethnic riots of 1983, thousands of Tamil refugees fled overseas to India, Australia, Canada, and the UK.⁶²⁸ This sowed the seeds for the Tamil diaspora and the transnational nature of the LTTE's insurgency. The global diaspora was a major part of the organization's fundraising and propaganda network. But the Tamil Nadu sanctuary was the heartbeat of the LTTE's military infrastructure. Insurgents connected with insurgents, but also formed bonds with elements of the Tamil Nadu political class, including with political groups such as the Dravida Kazhagam, the Kamraj Congress, and the Pure Tamil Movement.⁶²⁹ These political ties would prove extremely valuable over the course of the insurgency.

LTTE political liaisons met with Tamil Nadu politicians in Madras, the capital, but eleven other districts served as part of an extensive military infrastructure, each connected by a high-tech wireless network. The districts were the center of the LTTE's war supplies and are listed in no specific order with the military specialty in parentheses: Dharmapuri (procurement of explosives), Coimbatore (arms and ammunition manufacturing), Salem (explosives manufacturing), Periya (military clothing manufacturing), Vedaraniym (coastal area from where supplies were dispatched), Madurai (transit area), Thanjavur (communications center), Nagapattnam (landing area for supplies from ships), Rameswaram (refugee reception and

⁶²⁷ Kristian Stokke, "Building the Tamil Eelam State: Emerging State Institutions and Forms of Governance in LTTE-controlled Areas in Sri Lanka," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.27, Iss.6, 2006, p.1022.

⁶²⁸ Chalk, "LTTE in Sri Lanka," p.131.

⁶²⁹ Gunaratna, "International and Regional Implications."

recruitment), Tiruchi (treatment of wounded insurgents), and Tutocorin (trade in gold, silver, narcotics, and other goods).⁶³⁰

4.2.2.2 How did it change over time?

In the early years of the Tamil insurgency, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi lacked the political clout to convince Tamil Nadu's chief minister, M.G. Ramachandran, to close down the LTTE training camps that operated unmolested and free from scrutiny. Ramachandran possessed no great affinity for the insurgents, but he needed to be seen as sympathetic toward a group that could claim widespread popular support in the community and had already been embraced by Ramachandran's political rival, Muthuvel Karaunanidhi.⁶³¹ Blowback from Indira Gandhi's tacit support of the movement would come full circle over a decade later, when a Black Tiger attack killed her brother Rajiv, then prime minister.

Even though the Tigers were able to maintain connections to Tamil Nadu during their conflict with the IPKF, the relationship had changed considerably by the early 1990s. Fighting an occupation force on home territory was one matter, but to assassinate an Indian head of state on Indian soil (the only LTTE suicide bombing on foreign soil), was another story. There was a definite backlash within certain segments of the Tamil Nadu population. Furthermore, Indian security services vowed to be far more aggressive in their pursuit of any LTTE insurgents operating in Tamil Nadu. In 1995, feeling pressure, the LTTE established a permanent base in Twante, an island located off of the coast of Burma.⁶³² The Sri Lankan government pressured

⁶³⁰Ibid.

⁶³¹ Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.18.

⁶³² Ibid.

Burma's military junta to dismantle the Tigers' base, so in January 1996 the LTTE vacated Twante and developed a base on an island located off of Phuket, Thailand.

4.2.3 Finance/Fundraising

Finance sustains an insurgent group and offers a sense of hope, even when insurgents may not be winning on the battlefield. The LTTE had a limited capacity to raise funds internally in Sri Lanka, so the diaspora movement took on added significance. Different people surely donated for different reasons—shared ethnicity, religious fervor, genuine sympathy, coercion. Some donated very small amounts, while others donated hundreds of thousands of dollars. The LTTE collected donations from co-ethnics in Canada, France, Australia, Norway, the UK, and Switzerland, reflecting both the high concentration of Tamils in those countries as well as the lack of specific legislation outlawing the group from fundraising. In all, Peter Chalk estimates that an astonishing eighty to ninety percent of the LTTE's "war chest" originated abroad.⁶³³

4.2.3.1 Why was finance/fundraising such a valuable resource?

Seed money for licit businesses

While the LTTE did raise money through a range of organized criminal activities, much of the money donated by the Tamil diaspora was used for the creation of legitimate Tamil businesses. Beginning in 1983, the LTTE opened up restaurants in Tamil Nadu and Paris, France and

⁶³³ Personal interview with Chalk, November 2011. Gunaratna estimates that by late 1995, 40% of the LTTE's war budget was generated abroad until the loss of the Jaffna peninsula in 1996, when this number rose to 60%.

eventually branched out to London, Toronto, and Cambodia.⁶³⁴ The Tigers' brain trust also thought it wise to invest in stock and money markets. The group also maintained an impressive real estate portfolio. This entrepreneurial spirit extends to the sale of newspapers, videos, Asian spices. Members and activists invested in travel agencies, grocery stores, printing presses, money exchange and transfer agencies and import-export firms.⁶³⁵ The group diversified its asset base from agriculture to finance, invested in a number of farms, started finance companies, and constantly sought out other high profit venues.⁶³⁶

When donations were supplied to the LTTE the group used them as seed money to start and grow businesses, from telephone services to community radio stations. Tamils have historically been linked to commodity buying and selling, especially gold, so the LTTE aggressively entered this market too. Funds generated from legal businesses would be diverted to the group's war aims and ill-gotten gains from an array of smuggling activities were laundered through Tamil owned legal businesses and money exchange and transfer agencies (similar to *hawalas*) to evade detection by authorities. The LTTE became involved in the film industry, first through trading and investing, but later by founding video and CD shops, which generated sizeable revenue.⁶³⁷

Legal and Political Aims

⁶³⁴ Gunaratna, "International and Regional Implications."

⁶³⁵ Rohan Gunaratna, "Sri Lanka: Feeding the Tamil Tigers," in Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman, eds., *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003, p.192.

⁶³⁶ Ibid.

⁶³⁷ Ibid, p.209.

Money donated from abroad or earned through legally-owned Tamil businesses was used for more than just purchasing arms. Through its vast financial architecture, the LTTE was able to pay for the exorbitant legal fees of the group and its members. One example is especially revealing. According to Chalk, following the 1995 arrest of the LTTE's representative to Canada, Manikavasagam Suresh, the group organized demonstrations and a mass mail-out campaign that portrayed Suresh as a victim and accused the authorities of persecuting the Canadian Tamil population. Moreover, the group hired two highly paid lawyers to defend Suresh, including New York-based Viswanathan Ruthirakumaran (who happened to be the head of LTTE operations in the United States).⁶³⁸ When the group was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States in the late 1990s, Ruthirakumaran hired a leading US law firm headed by Ramsey Clark, the former Attorney General during the Johnson administration.

Organized Criminal Activities

LTTE members engaged in almost every form of organized crime possible, from drug trafficking to extortion and from arms smuggling to money laundering. Beginning in the mid-1980s, Tamil groups embarked on a bank-robbing spree in Jaffna. Out of ignorance, the LTTE argued that it was stealing from the "public" and not the Tamil people.⁶³⁹ Involvement in the drug trade first became apparent as early as 1984 when Swiss police reported that Tamils were responsible for

⁶³⁸ Peter Chalk, "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) International Organization and Operations—A Preliminary Analysis," Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Commentary No.77, Winter 1999.

⁶³⁹ Janine Lilja, "Trapping Constituents or Winning Hearts and Minds? Rebel Strategies to Attain Constituent Support in Sri Lanka," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.21, No.2, April 2009, p.313.

trafficking approximately 20 percent of the heroin coming into the country.⁶⁴⁰ Italian police also broke up several Tamil heroin rings throughout the 1980s. Sri Lanka's geographic proximity to the Golden Triangle of Laos, Burma, and Thailand, combined with the LTTE's advanced maritime capabilities made heroin trafficking an obvious racket for the group to pursue.⁶⁴¹ The Tigers' reach also extended into Pakistan, where they linked up with notorious Indian crime boss Dawood Ibrahim and his "D-Company" gang. They used the port city of Karachi to solidify a foothold in South Asia and diversify smuggling activities to include humans, in addition to heroin.⁶⁴²

The Sri Lankan government reported that the LTTE's human trafficking business netted the group approximately \$340 million by smuggling 17,000 people to 11 different countries.⁶⁴³ Although drug trafficking and human smuggling are two of the more well-known organized criminal activities perpetrated by the LTTE, the group also relied on various types of fraud (credit card, social security, bank, casino, etc.) and extortion to bankroll its operations.⁶⁴⁴ Extortion often involved coercion, with direct threats of implied violence to those who failed to 'donate' to the Tigers' war chest.⁶⁴⁵ Other times, extortion was accompanied by intimidation,

⁶⁴⁰ Weiss, *The Cage*, p.89

⁶⁴¹ The mid-1980s were probably the apex of Tamil drug trafficking arrests. In 1984, 317 drug traffickers were arrested. The next year, that number increased to 374, only to drop by 1986 to 218 arrests and flatline in 1990 at around 37. G. H. Peires, "Clandestine Transactions of the LTTE and the Secessionist Campaign in Sri Lanka," available from [www.ices.lk/publications/esr/articles_jan01/2001\(1\)-Peiris.rtf](http://www.ices.lk/publications/esr/articles_jan01/2001(1)-Peiris.rtf).

⁶⁴² Phil Williams, "Terrorist Financing and Organized Crime: Nexus, Appropriation, or Transformation?" in Thomas J. Biersteker and Sue E. Eckert (eds.), *Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, London: Routledge, 2008, p.139.

⁶⁴³ "Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka's Rebels Involved in Trafficking Human Cargo," *Xinhua News Agency*, 7 April 2000

⁶⁴⁴ A. Abocar, "Canada Police Say Tamil Gangs Funding Rebels," *Reuters*, 28 March 2000.

⁶⁴⁵ Phil Williams and Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Drug Trafficking, Violence, and Instability*, United States Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) monograph, Carlisle Barracks, PA: USAWC SSI, 2012, p.50.

blackmail, beatings, and threats against family members, both in Sri Lanka and abroad. Finally, the insurgents levied ‘taxes’ on a network of Hindu temples in the United Kingdom and Canada.⁶⁴⁶

Developing a World Class Maritime Operation

Each year the LTTE generated between \$24 and \$36 million in revenue. According to Chalk’s estimates, the group reaped \$800,000 a month from Canada, \$500,000 a month from Scandinavia, just shy of \$400,000 a month from the UK, \$250,000 from Australia, and another \$200,000 from the United States.⁶⁴⁷ Flush with cash, Prabhakaran understood that if his group were to have a legitimate chance to defeat the Sri Lankan military, the Tigers had to develop an effective maritime capability. The COIN forces used Israeli built ships, like *Dvora* class patrol crafts, to interdict LTTE supplies and sink and capture insurgent vessels.

In 1984, Prabhakaran created the Sea Tigers, which at its inception was equipped with several small vessels but grew to include a formidable maritime force comprised of four indigenously constructed vessels.⁶⁴⁸ The Sea Tigers were led by Colonel Soosai (Thillaiammambalam Sivanesan) from 1991 on, who commanded a division of two groups. The first group concentrated on tactical actions while the second group was responsible for the

⁶⁴⁶ Weiss, *The Cage*, p.89

⁶⁴⁷ Chalk, “LTTE in Sri Lanka,” p.146

⁶⁴⁸ The four man *Thrikka* class was armed with a single machine gun and used to deploy combat drivers. It could reach speeds of 45 knots. The six-man *Suddai* class was also armed with a single machine gun and used to attack naval vessels, topping out at a speed of approximately 10 knots. The *Muraj* class typically had three machine gunners on board and was versatile, attacking naval vessels, making logistic runs, and performing amphibious assaults. Finally, the two man *Idayan* class was an explosive-laden skiff designed for suicide attacks. Povlock, “Guerilla War at Sea,” p.19

LTTE's expanding fleet of merchant ships, known as the Sea Pigeons, which ferried both licit and illicit goods. Within this division were thirteen sections, including the Sea Battle 'Regiments,' Underwater Demolition Teams, Sea Tiger Strike Groups, and a Radar and Telecommunications Unit. A Marine Engineering and Boat Building Section, a Maritime School and Academy, a Recruiting Section, and sections to support ordnance, personnel, and logistics were all part of the Sea Tigers' shore infrastructure.⁶⁴⁹

4.2.3.2 How did it change over time?

Throughout the course of the insurgency, the LTTE consistently expanded and diversified its sources of income. In the early to mid-1980s, drug trafficking was a consistent revenue stream, but this changed over time. As the conflict wore on it became more and more difficult for the LTTE to sustain its fundraising network. Donations that were once offered freely later had to be coerced. Once Western nations like the United States and the United Kingdom began to crack down on LTTE activities within their respective countries, the group increasingly devoted more time and energy to organized crime as a method of financing its activities, including human smuggling. After the LTTE was proscribed as a terrorist organization in countries where it once raised funds freely, this shift opened the LTTE up to arrest and prosecution. In 2005, Canada outlawed LTTE fundraising networks. This proved a devastating blow to the insurgents, who lost an estimated \$12 million from the Canadian connection.⁶⁵⁰ The loss of revenue from Canada was a major factor in the LTTE's final defeat, especially because it occurred at the same time as the Sri Lankan COIN force was receiving \$1 billion annually in military and financial aid

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid, p.18

⁶⁵⁰ Stewart Bell, "Canada a Key Source of Tamil Tiger Funding," *National Post*, July 20, 2009.

from Beijing, as the Chinese sought to expand development rights for port facilities in South Asia.⁶⁵¹

4.3 ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

4.3.1 Command and Control

The LTTE's command and control was vertically structured, with the Central Governing Committee at the top of the organization. As "God become man," Prabhakaran lorded over both the political and military branches of the movement and ran the day-to-day operations in a command-driven style, although he did regularly consult with a small circle of trusted comrades on different aspects of policy.⁶⁵² The hierarchical structure of the group included a bell-shaped middle stratum of leaders built into the organization to provide the LTTE with a measure of redundancy and defend against the SLAF strategy of targeting Prabhakaran with a decapitation strike.⁶⁵³

The LTTE's entire movement counted approximately 15,000 cadres, to which an additional 3,000 to 4,000 personnel served with the Sea Tigers.⁶⁵⁴ The organizational structure

⁶⁵¹ Somini Sengupta, "Take Aid From China and Take a Pass on Human Rights," *The New York Times*, March 9, 2008; see also, Robert Kaplan, "To Catch a Tiger," *The Atlantic*, July 2009.

⁶⁵² Brendan O'Duffy, "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE): Majoritarianism, Self-Determination and Military-to-Political Transitions in Sri Lanka," in M. Heiburg, B. O'Leary and J. Tirman (eds.) *Terror, Insurgency and States*, Philadelphia, PA: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 2007. p.265.

⁶⁵³ Ibid, p.266.

⁶⁵⁴ C. Christine Fair, *Urban Battlefields of South Asia: Lessons Learned from Sri Lanka, India, and Pakistan*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2004, p.25.

was “two-tiered,’ geographically structured, and composed of seven regular commands each led by a district commander. Prabhakaran oversaw the seven district commanders and chaired the Central Governing Committee, charged with oversight for the military and political tiers of the organization. To join the Tigers, a recruit had to swear fealty not only to the organization as a whole and with it the goal of an independent Tamil Eelam, but also to Prabhakaran himself. He was viewed by many as omnipotent and omniscient in his decision-making. In short, though he was an eminently parochial figure at times, Prabhakaran was responsible for the global operations that this transnational organization had developed through its thirty-year history.

Prabhakaran’s ironclad grip over the organization started to fray beginning in the early 1990s, when he ordered the execution of long-time confidant and high ranking LTTE member Mahattaya. Prabhakaran accused his erstwhile colleague of plotting with the Indian army’s RAW to kill the top leadership of the group, including Prabhakaran himself.⁶⁵⁵ A second and even more devastating schism occurred with the defection of one of the LTTE’s top commanders, Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan (“Karuna”) in early 2004. The falling out between Prabhakaran and Karuna effectively split the LTTE in two; the former retained control of the northern faction while the latter came to exert control of the Tigers’ eastern faction. When the split led to open conflict between the two groups, the Sri Lankan government’s special task force supplied Karuna’s fighters with arms and sanctuary in return for intelligence about the LTTE’s northern units.⁶⁵⁶ Karuna subsequently handed over the LTTE playbook, which the COIN forces used to plan their final offensive.

⁶⁵⁵ O’Duffy, “Majoritarianism, Self-Determination and Military-to-Political Transitions,” p.266.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid, p.266.

The most important of the seven commands is the military wing, which was structured very close to the organization of a conventional professional army. Within the military wing were the Sea Tigers (navy), Black Tigers (suicide commando unit), and an elite intelligence outfit.⁶⁵⁷ A rudimentary air capability existed for a short time as well. Beneath the military wing was the political wing, led by Thamil Chelvam and Anton Balasingham. Throughout the course of the insurgency, the political branch remained subordinate to the military wing, although the former was elevated during instances of negotiations and cease-fires.⁶⁵⁸ But unlike the Army Council-Sinn Fein dynamic within the PIRA, the LTTE's political wing was never strong enough to usurp the military wing of the group. As much as outsiders might have wished, Prabhakaran was no Gerry Adams.

Insurgents within the seven commands were members of either a political wing or a combat group and further divided into specialized subdivisions.⁶⁵⁹ The LTTE operated as a meritocracy—it promoted insurgents and afforded them more responsibility with performance, rather than seniority. Upon promotion, the fighter received increased command responsibilities.⁶⁶⁰

As discussed above, the Sea Tigers were divided into two separate wings, one for amphibious operations and another for merchant marine type duties. This branch of the Tigers maintained an extensive organizational structure, including a substantial female naval unit.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid, p.265.

⁶⁵⁹ *Jane's World Insurgency and Terrorism*, Vol.15 (2002), available at www.janes.com

⁶⁶⁰ Fair, *Urban Battlefields*, p.29.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid, p.28.

The Sea Tigers had their own naval intelligence cell and the group also worked closely with the Black Tigers. The Black Tigers were suicide commandos selected from the most elite LTTE recruits. This wing of the organization was “fully integrated” into the LTTE’s land and sea operations.

4.3.2 Group Composition

4.3.2.1 Velupillai Prabhakaran

Vellupillai Prabhakaran was born in the northern coastal town of Velvettithurai on the Jaffna Peninsula in 1954 and grew up amidst poverty, violence and oppression, during a time when Sri Lankan Tamils struggled for equal status with the Sinhalese. He was born into the Karaiyar caste, a relatively low ranking rung of Sri Lankan society. The most common profession for men from Prabhakaran’s village was to become a maritime smuggler. From the little that is known about the LTTE’s reclusive leader, he was married to Mathivathani Erambu and had two children, a daughter Duwaraka and a son Charles Anthony, named after one of the Tigers’ most famous fighters, Charles Lucas Anthony, who was killed in the early 1980s. Physically, he was short and portly, which sometimes masked the steely determination hidden beneath an otherwise unassuming veneer of calm and quiet focus.

From an early age, Prabhakaran was fascinated by violence. In his teens, he was an admirer of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Napoleon, and Alexander the Great, although he

eventually became transfixed by the teachings of Subhash Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh.⁶⁶²

Prabhakaran was particularly interested in Bose, who some Sri Lankan scholars cite as Prabhakaran's hero, admired most for his combination of spiritualism and militancy. Bose was also known for his willingness to take on Mahatma Gandhi and for his legendary battles against the British Army as part of the Indian National Army. The LTTE's leader frequently quoted Bose to explain his own feelings on the Sri Lankan conflict, declaring "I shall fight for the freedom of my land until I shed the last drop of blood."⁶⁶³ This quote symbolized what would become a Prabhakaran hallmark throughout his tenure as the LTTE's leader—an unwavering commitment to action over rhetoric.

At the young age of 18, Prabhakaran founded the Tamil New Tigers (TNT), the predecessor to the LTTE. Three years later, he became a household name following his assassination of Jaffna's Sinhalese mayor, Alfred Duraippah. Duraippah was shot in the head at point blank range as he entered a Hindu temple. He had attracted the scorn of Prabhakaran and other radical Tamils for his support of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and for his apparent unwillingness to side with the Tamil nationalist cause in Sri Lanka.

Within the LTTE, Prabhakaran was the group's most committed and ardent ideologue. His views on ideology and nationalism are explained in more depth in the section on ideology below, but overall he remained a Tamil nationalist first and foremost. While he could be extremely sensitive to criticism, Prabhakaran practiced what he preached. Similar to other well-known insurgent commanders, he was known to live a monastic lifestyle and mostly eschewed

⁶⁶² Prabhakaran was obsessed with Che Guevara and believed that "guerilla action" was the key to mobilizing his followers.

⁶⁶³ M.R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerillas*, Delhi: Konark, 2004, pp.50-51.

material comforts while insisting that his fellow Tigers forgo sex and abstain from alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. He went for more than a decade without having contact with his parents. Gordon Weiss characterizes Prabhakaran, and similar insurgent leaders, by describing them in the following manner: “unlike ordinary mortals, they turn their backs on the ordinary relationships, quotidian fears and communal safety nets that nurture and restrain others.”⁶⁶⁴

The best insight into Prabhakaran’s belief system comes from his rare interviews, his annual speeches during Tamil Eelam Heroes Day, and the policies and actions he oversaw as the group’s top leader. Like many other insurgent and terrorist leaders who grew to become radicalized and militant, Prabhakaran was convinced of the necessity of armed struggle after finding non-violent means to be an inferior and tepid response to increasing Sinhala chauvinism and anti-Tamil discrimination. When asked in a 1986 interview why he was so uncompromising on the supremacy of armed struggle versus other, less-violent means, Prabhakaran responded,

“It is the plight of the Tamil people that compelled me to take up arms. I felt outraged at the inhuman atrocities perpetrated against an innocent people. The ruthless manner in which our people were murdered, massacred, maimed and the colossal damage done to their property made me realize that we are subjected to a calculated program of genocide. I felt that armed struggle is the only way to protect and liberate our people from a totalitarian Fascist State bent on destroying an entire race of people.”⁶⁶⁵

Two interesting aspects of Prabhakaran’s leadership were the cult of personality that formed around the leader and his constant paranoia throughout his tenure as LTTE leader. Most accounts of Prabhakaran make reference to his status as a hero who was afforded a god-like worship by LTTE cadres and elements of the Tamil population. Followers swore an oath of

⁶⁶⁴ Weiss, *The Cage*, pp.74-75.

⁶⁶⁵ Tamil National Leader Velupillai Pirapaharan’s interview, “The Week,” *Tamil Eelam Homepage*, March 1986, www.eelam.com/interviews/leader_march_86.html, last accessed February 4, 2012.

loyalty to Prabhakaran himself, and referred to him strictly as “Leader,” because his actual name was known to inspire so much awe.⁶⁶⁶ In speeches, his language was both inspirational and visionary, and often evoked the nationalistic pride held by many of his followers. As related by Post, a Jaffna psychiatrist described the impact of Prabhakaran’s leadership, noting that many LTTE members “regard Prabhakaran as higher than their own god,” and many would make pilgrimages to his former home as something akin to a spiritual ritual.⁶⁶⁷ Pictures of Prabhakaran adorned homes and businesses throughout rebel-held areas.

While the praise and worship that accompanied his position as the Tigers’ number one certainly contributed to his growing narcissism over the years, it did nothing to alleviate his constant paranoia. Part of this paranoia stemmed from the fact that he spent most of his life on the run, traveling back and forth between Sri Lanka’s northeast to Tamil Nadu and moving from safe house to safe house to evade capture and avoid arrest. Still, Prabhakaran wore his status as a wanted man as a badge of honor. When asked what it felt like to be the most wanted man in Sri Lanka, he replied, “When the Sri Lanka government refers to me as the most wanted man it means that I am a true Tamil patriot. Hence I feel proud to be indicted as a wanted man.”⁶⁶⁸

Throughout the entire three decade insurgency, Prabhakaran viewed compromise as futile, unless it would strengthen his cause and allow him to further consolidate his grip on power and the position of the LTTE. Some leaders evolve over time, but Prabhakaran never did. He was wary of even his most-trusted companions and throughout his reign, he remained a

⁶⁶⁶ Jerrold M. Post, *The Mind of the Terrorist: The Psychology of Terrorism from the IRA to al-Qaida*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p.92.

⁶⁶⁷ Andrew Perrin, “Tiger Country: Whatever the outcome of peace talks between Colombo and the separatist Tigers, a Tamil nation in all but law already exists in Sri Lanka’s battle-scarred northeast,” *Time*, 16 September 2002.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Anita Pratap, *Sunday Magazine*, India, March 11-17, 1984.

highly controlling authoritarian leader. Dissent within the ranks, especially among the LTTE leadership, was unwelcome and frequently met with punishment, including death. As detailed in the section on seminal events below, Prabhakaran's rigidity led to a split within the group and the defection of "Colonel Karuna" in 2004, a major blow to the cohesion of the organization.

Prabhakaran limited the emergence of potential competition by either marginalizing or murdering those who spoke out against him or questioned the LTTE's strategy. He viewed those who disagreed with him not as dissenters, or individuals with an alternative point of view, but rather as traitors. "According to scores of accounts from defectors and others who escaped Tiger tyranny, many of his own lieutenants were murdered; Tamils who criticized him, even mildly or in jest, were banished to dungeons, starved and hauled out periodically for battering by their guards."⁶⁶⁹

4.3.2.2 Anton Stanislaus Balasingham

While Prabhakaran was the unquestioned leader of the LTTE, revered for his aggressive posture and action-oriented style, Anton Balasingham served as the Tigers' chief rhetorician, political strategist, and negotiator. Balasingham was born to a Hindu mother and Roman Catholic father in Batticaloa, located in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province, in 1938. He spent significant time abroad, mostly in London, and worked as a translator to the British High Commission in Colombo.⁶⁷⁰ In 1979, Balasingham penned the LTTE's first major theoretical work, *Towards Socialist Eelam*, a highly ideological document infused with the author's trademark views on Marxism. The tome became popular among Jaffna's *intelligentsia* and cemented Balasingham's credentials as a

⁶⁶⁹ Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, p.71.

⁶⁷⁰ Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, p.67.

committed revolutionary.

Unlike Prabhakaran, though, Balasingham was open-minded, intellectually curious, and prone to exploring the complexity inherent in the several sides of politico-military matters. Though Balasingham served as somewhat of a mentor to the younger Prabhakaran, they did not always coexist easily, occasionally disagreeing on the centrality of Marxism to the movement. Furthermore, Prabhakaran had at times mocked Balasingham, assailing him as “an arm chair intellectual” who was “afraid of blood.”⁶⁷¹ Balasingham was a moderating force on the group and furthermore, he held the dubious honor as the only member of the LTTE leadership who consistently criticized or disagreed with Prabhakaran and lived to tell about it.

The two maintained a unique partnership throughout the struggle for Tamil independence, as Prabhakaran ceded control of the LTTE’s political wing to Balasingham, although he still held the ultimate say over Tiger policy and strategy, especially as it related to the negotiation process with the Sri Lankan state. According to Weiss, “In Balasingham, Prabhakaran recognized a man who could formulate and espouse a lucid ideology to underwrite the raw energy that he himself would provide for the brewing insurgency. In Prabhakaran, the older man saw conviction, physical courage and steadfast commitment.”⁶⁷² It was this combination of strength and reason that allowed the LTTE to fight and survive for over three decades.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid, p.69.

⁶⁷² Weiss, *The Cage*, p.67.

4.3.3 Ideology

The Tamil Tigers are often classified as an ethno-nationalist terrorist group.⁶⁷³ Translated loosely, this means the LTTE was comprised of ethnic Tamils and sought freedom for a clearly defined national territory (Eelam). Still, because the Tigers' core group was initially comprised of students living abroad, there was also the requisite Marxist influence of stereotypical "coffee house revolutionaries."⁶⁷⁴ Among Tamil insurgent groups, the Tamil Tigers were not unique in their taste for left wing politics. Both the PLOTE and the TELO were Marxist groups, and the JVP were Maoists.⁶⁷⁵

Insurgent political thought, however nascent, requires a modicum of organization. So when violence broke out in 1983, the ideologically- inclined Tamil groups were best placed to protect Tamil neighborhoods. With this protection came a platform, which the various groups used to spread their ideologies. After the 1983 riots, Marxist groups engulfed the non-Marxist groups through both persuasion and coercion.⁶⁷⁶ Though at first the LTTE adopted Marxism as an ideology of convenience, the intensity of the group's radical leftist beliefs grew more fervent over time.⁶⁷⁷ Balasingham, the LTTE's aforementioned theoretician, explained the LTTE's ideology as follows: "our total strategy integrates both the national struggle and class struggle,

⁶⁷³ According to Brendan O'Duffy, the LTTE always rejected the notion that the conflict was simply about ethnicity at its core. According to this line of thinking, if full civil and political rights were to be restored to the Tamils and other minority communities, then the conflict would cease. However, the LTTE regarded the conflict as *ethno-national* in scope, which included the indispensable element of national self-determination to be recognized. O'Duffy, p.264.

⁶⁷⁴ Marks, "Ideology of Insurgency," p.112.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid. On p.114, Marks notes that of the main Marxist groups, the PLOTE were the most sophisticated politically.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid, p.114.

⁶⁷⁷ Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam*, p.188.

interlinks both nationalism and socialism into a revolutionary project aimed at liberating our people both from national oppression and from the exploitation of man by man.”⁶⁷⁸

The LTTE fought for a united Tamil Eelam homeland in Northeast Sri Lanka. Like the PIRA, independence was considered the ultimate goals and objectives of the organization. Some members figured that if Marxism could shepherd the process toward this end, then so be it. Most foot soldiers fought for justice and the opportunity to redress grievances, while the leadership spoke of leaving behind the chains imposed by the twin evils of capitalism and imperialism.⁶⁷⁹

Under the leadership of R.N. Dixit, the Indian High Commission in Colombo devoted significant resources to determine which groups were “really Marxist” and which groups were frauds. But Dixit failed to understand the motivation of the insurgents, Marxist or otherwise. That the insurgents *considered* themselves Marxist, used Marxist models in their strategic analysis and decision-making, tactically employed classic Marxist clandestine techniques and couched their language in Marxist phraseology was most important.⁶⁸⁰

4.3.4 Popular Support

The popular support of the Tamil population for the LTTE’s insurgency can be broken down into three distinct periods. First, largely due to Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and discriminatory policies, popular support was thrown behind a patchwork of Tamil militant groups who voiced their displeasure with the increasingly chauvinistic policies implemented by the Sinhala-

⁶⁷⁸ A.S. Balasingham, *Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle*, Madras: Political Committee, LTTE, 1983, p.42.

⁶⁷⁹ Marks, *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam*, p.192.

⁶⁸⁰ Marks, “Ideology of Insurgency,” p.114.

dominated government. Second, following the “Black July” riots of 1983, escalating violence between the two communities led the population to support the dozens of militant Tamil organizations. Of these dozen, the Tigers managed to cement their reputation as the most respected and most feared. By the 1990s, the LTTE still garnered widespread support, but had also resorted to coercion and intimidation to maintain the allegiance of the Tamil population, many of whom had become weary of the violence.

The thirty five year period between independence and open warfare in Sri Lanka was characterized by the ongoing effort of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority to consolidate control over all aspects of society. To achieve this, the Sinhalese-dominated government instituted a series of reforms aimed at scaling back the historical influence of the Tamil minority. These reforms were widely interpreted as hostile acts of an ethnically homogenous group and thus, became major grievances of Tamils throughout Sri Lanka.

Both insurgent theorists and social movement scholars highlight the importance of the links between grievances and the provision of popular support. The “Sinhala Only” Act of 1956 was the opening salvo in the area of language, making Sinhalese the sole official language of the country. Affirmative action policies were then instituted in the country’s universities, making it more difficult for Tamils to receive a quality education. In terms of employment, the proportion of Tamils employed by the Sri Lankan government decreased from 60% to 10% in the civilian sector and from 40% to 1% in the military between 1956 and 1970. In 1972, the constitution was rewritten, and legal safeguards for minorities were excised from the document.⁶⁸¹

In the second phase of popular support, grievances remained a major reason for offering support to Tamil militant groups, but revenge and the themes of repression and occupation

⁶⁸¹ Weiss, *The Cage*, pp.46-47.

became the overarching concerns of the Tamils. Sinhala nationalism was on the rise and exploded with the anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983. The “Black July” riots of 1983 resulted in the deaths of between 1,000 and 3,000 Tamils with thousands more wounded and raped. Countless others had their homes and shops burned to the ground.⁶⁸² In some areas, civilians were pulled from their homes by Sinhala mobs who carried voter registration lists to determine which families were Tamil.⁶⁸³ “Black July” was a watershed event in the conflict and one which caused the Tamil population to throw its support behind those who were willing and able to protect those that remained (hundreds of thousands of Tamils fled abroad, while an additional 100,000 settled in refugee camps) and transformed Tamil militancy into “an engine of popular resentment.”⁶⁸⁴

In the insurgency that ensued, the LTTE leadership followed a deliberate strategy of provoking COIN force overreaction and using the resulting collateral damage to generate popular support among its constituency. To be sure, the Tamils needed little help in this area. The SLAF’s “disordered brutality” led to the mass killing of civilians which throughout the conflict had been “one of the basic anti-insurgency tools of the security forces,” and earned it a reputation as an occupation force.⁶⁸⁵

During the final period of the insurgency, the LTTE relied more on violent and coercive methods to generate and maintain popular support than it had at any point previously in the conflict. The group employed what Jannie Lilja terms “territorial entrapment” and “social

⁶⁸² Ibid, p.54.

⁶⁸³ Ibid, p.53.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid, p.71.

⁶⁸⁵ Weiss, *The Cage*, pp.72-73.

entrapment” to induce cooperation and attitudinal support from its constituency.⁶⁸⁶ Social and cultural obligations to support the Tigers were reinforced by a mixture of propaganda speeches and restrictions on the movement of Tamils. The recruitment patterns of fighters into the organization mirrored the evolution of the popular support of the Tamil population.

But much like Hizballah, the LTTE also received sympathy and support because it devoted a significant amount of manpower to social service provision. A stated objective of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was to build legitimacy throughout the northeast by providing social services to areas beyond the reach of the Sri Lankan state, or in areas where capacity gaps and functional holes were present. The LTTE has moved back and forth on this continuum throughout the course of the insurgency. The insurgents would ideally like to be in the two darkest colored boxes further to the right, while the COIN force would like the situation to reflect the lightest colored box furthest to the left. The light grey colored box second in from the left is not ideal for either the COIN force or the insurgents, but favors the insurgents in the short and medium term.

The 2002 cease-fire solidified the northeast as a Tamil home base by granting the LTTE autonomy and freedom of movement. The Tigers recognized that the population was a contest between the insurgents and the COIN forces. But because the LTTE lacked the resources of the NGO community, the Tigers’ political wing worked closely with civil society organizations. After the United States declared the LTTE a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) in 1997 and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) group in November 2001, became much more

⁶⁸⁶ Lilja, “Trapping Constituents,” pp.314-318.

difficult for the Tigers to raise funds through NGOs and related charities.⁶⁸⁷ Still, organizations like the Tamil Relief Organization (TRO) remained closely linked with the Tigers and were described as a veritable humanitarian arm of the LTTE. This link grew stronger following the 2005 tsunami.

The LTTE essentially controlled where and how NGOs operated, and then used its provision of services to enact support and even recruits. Moreover, the group used a steering committee to direct aid from Colombo, in effect claiming good will for services provided by the state. In the last several years of the conflict, the LTTE's actions caused its popular support among the population to plummet. As recruitment waned, the LTTE forcibly integrated child soldiers into its organization.⁶⁸⁸ After the defection of Karuna in 2004, the insurgents arrested, tortured, and killed scores of Tamil civilians suspected of being spies for the Karuna faction.⁶⁸⁹

4.3.5 Public Relations/Propaganda

Among insurgent groups, the LTTE was one of the first groups to realize the importance of a robust public relations and propaganda machine in winning the battle for hearts and minds. The group's activities were run by V. Manoharan, who operated a transnational network with offices located in the UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia.⁶⁹⁰ In Toronto, the

⁶⁸⁷ Peter Chalk notes that after being designated as a FTO by the US in 1997, other states began to review their own practices with regard to LTTE activity in their country. The UK, for example, has struggled with first PIRA terrorism and then Islamist militancy, so has moved to make the incitement of terrorism an illegal activity and connected to this, publicity and fund-raising has become a criminal offense. Chalk, Commentary no.77.

⁶⁸⁸ M. Mayilvaganan, "Is it Endgame for LTTE?" *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.33, No.1, 2008, p.31.

⁶⁸⁹ Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe, "Strategic Analysis of Sri Lankan Military's Counterinsurgency Operations," *Future Directions International*, Strategic Analysis Paper, February 2010.

⁶⁹⁰ Chalk, "LTTE International Organization and Operations—A Preliminary Analysis," In addition to these Western nations, the LTTE also had representatives working in Cambodia, Burma, South Africa, and Botswana.

group operated four 24-hour radio stations, 10 weekly newspapers and Tamil language television programs.⁶⁹¹ But of all its overseas bases, none was more integral to success than the LTTE's British headquarters. The LTTE International Secretariat has operated continuously in London since 1984.⁶⁹²

The bulk of the group's efforts directed its message to various segments of the Tamil diaspora (those that would contribute money to the group) and politicians and human-rights activists who might be able to influence the situation from a diplomatic or political perspective. The primary messages put forth by the LTTE were the following: Tamils are the innocent victims of a Sinhalese orchestrated campaign of genocide and annihilation; Sri Lankan Tamils (who account for a mere 12.5% of the population) have been subjected to severe discrimination and both overwhelming and disproportionate military oppression; and due to the long history of discrimination and oppression, Tamils and Sinhalese can never co-exist peacefully in a single state.⁶⁹³

To get its message out, the LTTE distributed graphic videos, pamphlets, calendars, and other publications that demonstrated the Sri Lankan government's deadly military strikes, with resulting collateral damage and the slaughter of civilians. Sympathy for the plight of the Tamils helped generate a more pliable diaspora community, which responded in kind by donating money to the LTTE and offering its members sanctuary abroad. Although foreign policy realists

⁶⁹¹ John C. Thompson and Jon Turlej, *Other People's Wars: A Review of Overseas Terrorism in Canada*, Toronto: The Mackenzie Institute, 2003, p.21.

⁶⁹² According to Gunaratna, the LTTE has established, absorbed, or infiltrated a number of LTTE front or pro-LTTE organizations in the UK, including the Tamil Information Center at Tamil House in Romford Road in London, The Tamil Rehabilitation Organization in Walthamstow in London, and the International Federation of Tamils (IFT) in Birchew Close in Surrey.

⁶⁹³ Chalk, "LTTE International Organization and Operations—A Preliminary Analysis."

often minimize the importance of domestic populations on how states behave, the Tamil population in India clearly held sway with politicians in that country and insisted on intervention by Delhi to resolve the conflict in one form or another. The LTTE's public relations machine became so effective that attempts by the government in Colombo to counteract its propaganda activities fell short.⁶⁹⁴ LTTE publications included journals and newspapers, and in North America alone, there were over 40 Sri Lankan Tamil newspapers, more than three-quarters of which were managed by the LTTE or associated front groups. To put this in perspective, "the LTTE propaganda and fund raising network is superior to other extant networks such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Kashmiris, or the Basques," judges Rohan Gunaratna.⁶⁹⁵

In 2002, the Sri Lankan government allowed the Tigers to broadcast their previously banned "Voices of Tigers" FM radio station throughout northern Sri Lanka.⁶⁹⁶ The LTTE also established an online presence, creating a "virtual Tamil nation," that provided a treasure trove of information related to the LTTE, its origins, Prabhakaran, and atrocities committed by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces.⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹⁴ C. Van de Voorde, "Sri Lankan Terrorism," p.192.

⁶⁹⁵ Gunaratna, "International and Regional Implications."

⁶⁹⁶ IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

⁶⁹⁷ For more on this, see Shyam Tekwani, "The LTTE's Online Network and its Implications for Regional Security," Singapore: Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, January 2006.

4.4 STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

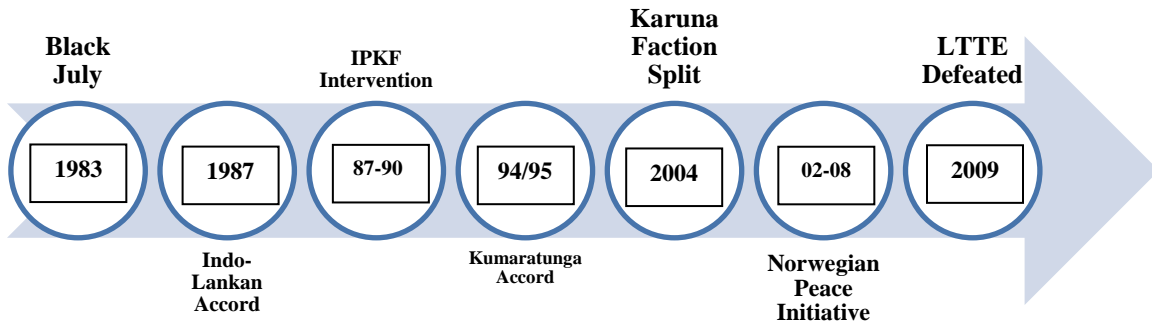


Figure 12: Timeline of LTTE Seminal Events and Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

4.4.1 Goals/Objectives

The LTTE is most accurately characterized as an ethno-nationalist organization. The ultimate goal of the Tigers was the establishment of an independent and sovereign Tamil Eelam in northern and eastern Sri Lanka.⁶⁹⁸ The path to independence was to be achieved through the devolution of power and political self-determination. While Anton Balasingham was the group's ideological heavyweight and provided the Marxist backdrop to the LTTE's propaganda and

⁶⁹⁸ Syed Rifaat Hussain, "Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE): Failed Quest for a 'Homeland,'" in Klejda Mulaj ed., *Violent Non-State Actors in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010, p.401.

public statements, Prabhakaran provided his most comprehensive answer to what a Tamil state would look like if it gained independence. He proclaimed:

“Tamil Eelam will be a socialist state. By socialism I mean an egalitarian society where human freedom and individual liberties will be guaranteed, where all forms of oppression and exploitation will be abolished. It will be a free society where our people will have maximum opportunity to develop their economy and promote their culture. Tamil Eelam will be a neutral state, committed to non-alignment and friendly to India, respecting her regional policies, particularly the policy of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.”⁶⁹⁹

To Prabhakaran, an egalitarian society was one with only one political party supported thoroughly by the people. To achieve the change that would be necessary, and to answer the needs of the Tamil people, a one-party state following the constructs of a socialist constitution was to be implemented. By egalitarian, Prabhakaran was not alluding to a multi-party democracy. Nine days after the founding of the Tigers on May 5, 1976, the LTTE’s leaders put forth the Vaddukoddai Resolution. This document outlined the path to the ‘restoration and reconstitution of the Free Sovereign, Secular and Socialist State of Tamil Eelam based on the rights of self-determination inherent to every nation.’⁷⁰⁰

Anita Pratap’s interview with Prabhakaran is perhaps most revealing of the shadowy organization’s true objectives. During the interview, Prabhakaran took time to clarify the LTTE’s classification as a separatist group. He said, “It is wrong to call our movement ‘separatist’...We are not fighting for a division or separation of a country but rather, we are

⁶⁹⁹ Interview with Anita Pratap, *Sunday Magazine*, India, March 11-17, 1984.

⁷⁰⁰ http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/document/papers/vaddukoddai_resolution.htm, site accessed March 31, 2012.

fighting to uphold the sacred right to live in freedom and dignity. In this sense, we are freedom fighters not terrorists.”⁷⁰¹

4.4.2 Seminal Events

4.4.2.1 “Black July” (1983)

To understand the importance of the “July Holocaust riots,” more commonly known as “Black July,” it is essential to recount the events leading up to the violence.⁷⁰² Recriminations among the population throughout the Jaffna peninsula was growing for years, hardening ethnic identities and reinforcing sectarian stereotypes of both Tamils and Sinhalese. In June 1982, two Sinhala security force recruits were killed. In response, Sinhalese gangs burned down the Jaffna library in what many Tamils interpreted as an act of cultural genocide. With tensions already high, on July 24, 1983, thirteen Sri Lankan government soldiers were killed by a land mine in Jaffna. Their deaths sparked a week-long riot throughout the country, with violence the worst in parts of Jaffna and Colombo.

While figures vary, most estimates put the death toll at somewhere between 1,000 and 3,000 people, with thousands more wounded and raped. Government figures placed the death

⁷⁰¹ Pratap, *Sunday*, 11-17 March 1984.

⁷⁰² For further information on the “Black July” riots, see H.A.I. Goonetilleke, ‘July 1983 and the National Question in Sri Lanka: A Bibliographical Guide,’ *Race and Class*, XXVI, 1, summer 1984; *Sri Lanka: Racism and the Authoritarian State*, pp.159-193; Pradeep Jeganathan, ‘Violence as an Analytical Problem: Sri Lankanist Anthropology after July 1983,’ *Nethra* Special Issue, ‘July ’83 and After,’ 6, 1 and 2, April-Sept 2003, pp.4-44; Stanley J. Tambiah, *Levelling Crowds: Collective Violence and Ethno-nationalist Conflict in South Asia*, New Delhi, 1997; J. Spencer (ed.), *History and the Roots of Conflict*, London, 1990; Partha Chatterjee and Pradeep Jeganathan (eds), *Subaltern Studies IX: Community, Gender and Violence*, New Delhi, 2000; Valli Kanapathipillai, ‘July 1983: The Survivor’s Experience’ in Veena Das (ed.), *Mirrors of Violence*, New Delhi, 1990, pp.321-344.

toll at around 300.⁷⁰³ In what would mark the beginning of the worldwide Tamil diaspora, 100,000 Tamils fled to refugee camps while countless others fled abroad, never to return to their homeland. But even more troubling than the actual number of individuals killed is the manner in which they were murdered. The violence between Tamils and Sinhalese, although based in ethnic conflict, seemed almost anomic in its nature.

In Colombo, Sinhala mobs took to the streets with sticks and clubs, pulled Tamils from their cars and beat them to death in the road. Some were “necklaced,” a process that involves having a rubber tire filled with gasoline placed around a victim’s chest and arms and lit on fire until the individual burns to death. Police either stood by and watched or participated directly themselves. Roving gangs constructed roadblocks in the streets and stopped cars to check the identification cards of the passengers, occasionally quizzing them with difficult Sinhalese words in an attempt to determine their ethnicity. Early on during the riots, 35 Tamil political detainees were beaten and hacked to death at Welikade prison. No charges were ever filed against the attackers.⁷⁰⁴

After the bloodshed ceased, the Sri Lankan government attempted to portray the riots as a spontaneous reaction to increasing ethnic discord. But with the benefit of hindsight, it now seems clear that “Black July” was a deliberate campaign of intimidation and murder orchestrated by various elements of the Sri Lankan state. Mob leaders carried voter registration cards and records of Tamil-owned businesses, information that could not have been obtained without the tacit collusion of government officials. Members of the Jathika Sevaka Samithiya (JSS), the government-supported union with its own intelligence apparatus, helped develop

⁷⁰³ Weiss, *The Cage*, p.54.

⁷⁰⁴ Neelan Tiruchelvam, “Devolution and the Elusive Quest for Peace,” in Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.193.

dossiers on Tamils, mapping out where they lived, worked, and owned property.⁷⁰⁵ Two weeks before the riots, President Jayawardene publicly stated that he did not care if the Tamils of Jaffna starved and even suggested that the Sinhalese people would be pleased if they did. Many interpreted this as a “green light” to practice outright discrimination. Some government ministers, including several prominent UNP members, even “directed violence, managed gangs, and assisted with the logistics of the attacks.”⁷⁰⁶

The “Black July” riots were far from the spontaneous reaction of increasingly clashing sectarian groups. On the contrary, the riots and accompanying violence were the result of a convergence of political, economic, and ideological factors. Blaming “the other,” in this case Tamils, is a classic political ploy to deflect negative attention from one’s own group and refocus feelings of ill-will on another entity. This was the quintessential model of Middle Eastern dictators for decades, as they deflected popular anger against a collection of Western imperialists, Zionist Israelis, and other allegedly nefarious actors. This same tactic was employed in Sri Lanka. Tamil populism was spreading in both the north and the south during the early 1980s, and following a controversial 1982 referendum, the Sinhala-dominated government had grown insecure.

From an economic perspective, as Bandarage points out, reforms enacted to the Sri Lankan economy in 1977 led to a growing success among Tamil entrepreneurs. Many Sinhalese businessmen saw this as a zero-sum game and resented the economic liberalization of the financial sector. As a result, these individuals may have instigated the urban poor to burn down and destroy Tamil-owned shops and businesses, as well as Indian enterprises now being painted

⁷⁰⁵ L. Piyadasa, *Sri Lanka: the Holocaust and After*, London: Marram Books, 1984, p.98.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

as exploitative and foreign.⁷⁰⁷ On the ideological front, two prominent Sinhala Buddhist nationalists, Cyril Mathew and Elle Gunawansa, promoted Sinhala fundamentalism, which served to fan the flames of conflict. Mathew, who at the time of the riots served as the Minister of Industries and Scientific Affairs, encouraged the violence as an effort to purge those who “have their cultural origins beyond the shores of the island.”⁷⁰⁸

The most far-reaching consequence of “Black July” was that it galvanized Tamil opposition groups and led the insurgents to reconfigure from the defensive to the offensive. While Sri Lanka itself was not immune to sectarian violence, experiencing communal rioting in 1958, 1977, and 1981 respectively, “Black July” was on another level. According to Tiruchelvam, there was “a qualitative difference in the intensity, brutality, and organized nature of the violence of July 1983. There is no other event which is so deeply etched in the collective memories of the victims and the survivors.”⁷⁰⁹ Gunaratna argues that the events of “Black July” would serve as the final ingredient in a recipe for protracted internal ethnic conflict. He observes:

“The Tamils [now] had all the prerequisites in place for creating a state identity all of their own. As the conflict deepened, the moderates were isolated. This paved the way for extremists on both sides to ascent to decision-making positions. With no hope of a negotiated settlement, the political climate was gradually becoming favorable for [the] Tamil insurgency. Within three months of the riots, the insurgents had increased their cadres’ strength by several folds and enjoyed wider public support.”⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁷ Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity, and Political Economy*, London: Routledge, 2009, pp.107-108.

⁷⁰⁸ Piyadasa, *The Holocaust and After*, p.103.

⁷⁰⁹ Neelan Tiruchelvam, “Devolution and the Elusive Quest for Peace,” in Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.191.

⁷¹⁰ Rohan Gunaratna, *Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Crisis and National Security*, Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1998, p.112.

Almost every insurgency has a defining moment, an incident which upon looking back at history, scholars can pinpoint as the catalyst that helped propel the movement forward and symbolize the struggle. For the PIRA, there were several of these, though “Bloody Sunday” stands out as the most important. In Lebanon, Israel’s 1982 invasion of the country became Hizballah’s rallying cry for nearly two decades of conflict while in South Africa the Sharpeville massacre symbolized a tipping point for the black majority population in its struggle against apartheid. The “Black July” riots of 1983 fulfilled this requirement for the LTTE. The riots led to an increase in recruitment, popular support and sympathy for the insurgents. This sympathy translated into a seemingly endless stream of money and weapons from a diaspora community that had initially been displaced as a result of the week of violence perpetrated against Tamils and sanctioned by the Sri Lankan state.

4.4.2.2 Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) Intervention (1987-1990)

The Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) deployed 13,000 troops to Sri Lanka in late July 1987 as per the terms of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accords. Some figures place the number of Indian troops dispatched to Sri Lanka at between 50,000 and 100,000, numbers that the Indian military would likely play down lest it risk further embarrassment.⁷¹¹ Although the IPKF was sent as a peacekeeping force, shortly after reaching Sri Lanka it was forced to wage a counterinsurgency against the LTTE. Four months after the Indians arrived, seventeen insurgents were captured by Sri Lankan naval forces which caught the LTTE members smuggling weapons. While waiting

⁷¹¹ Rohan Gunaratna, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka: The Role of India’s Intelligence Services* (Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1993, p.269.

for the IPKF and the Sri Lankan government to determine who would retain custody of the fighters, fifteen of the seventeen insurgents committed suicide by swallowing cyanide capsules. Less than a week later, the LTTE slaughtered five Indian para commandos, sparking all-out warfare between the insurgents and the peacekeepers.

The Indian force was plagued with difficulties from the very beginning of the intervention. First, the LTTE never really bought in to the concept of a peacekeeping force. Prabhakaran was pressured to accept the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, which he did, although he soon reversed course and denounced the agreement. The LTTE was supposed to disarm, but the insurgents mostly handed over outdated weapons and stockpiled its better weaponry. Even though India is geographically proximate to Sri Lanka and shares many cultural similarities, the IPKF was still viewed by many, both Tamils and Sinhalese, as an occupying force.⁷¹² Being viewed as an occupying force makes it more difficult for the COIN forces to “win hearts and minds.” This was a major challenge for the IPKF in Sri Lanka despite its efforts to avoid civilian casualties and an honest attempt to repair and rebuild critical infrastructure in war-torn areas.

Second, because the Sri Lankan police were viewed as a sectarian force and were already discredited in the eyes of the local population, the IPKF struggled with law and order issues as well as intelligence collection and analysis. Compounding this problem was the fact that the IPKF initially deployed to Sri Lanka as a peacekeeping force. However, shortly after its arrival, Indian troops found themselves fighting an insurgency for which they were woefully unprepared. The IPKF’s small numbers during its first wave of troops meant that it was “grossly under

⁷¹² David Edelstein argues that occupations are generally likely to succeed only if they are lengthy; extended occupations, however, are likely to produce nationalist reactions that can stymie an occupation’s chances of success. See Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail,” *International Security*, vol.29, iss.1, Summer 2004, pp.49-91.

strength.”⁷¹³ This prohibited the Indians from conducting effective sealing operations against the insurgents. Furthermore, Indian rules of engagement (ROE) were rather restrictive. Limited mobility, inadequate weaponry, and the imperative to avoid civilian casualties at all costs hampered COIN forces that fought skilled insurgents with no such restrictions.⁷¹⁴

Third, Indian forces had no experience fighting insurgencies in an urban environment. Though throughout its history the Indian state has battled multiple, overlapping insurgencies on its own soil (Kashmir, the Sikh insurgency in Punjab, the Naxalites in “the red corridor” in India’s east and northeast), its experience in urban settings has been minimal. The IPKF had no contingency plans to guard against many of these shortcomings and its mission creep elicited comparisons to the US experience in Vietnam.⁷¹⁵ The Indian government assumed that the IPKF would be welcomed in its role as a peacekeeping force and failed to prepare for the possibility of a protracted armed conflict with the LTTE.⁷¹⁶ Finally, the inability of the Indian troops to conduct joint operations severely hindered its performance. During this same time period, maintaining a strong posture vis-à-vis Pakistan took precedence over all else. According to Ouellet, the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Sunderji, took several smaller units to piece together the IPKF. “The net result was a fair bit of confusion, as the IPKF became a heteroclite

⁷¹³ Fair, *Urban Battlefields*, p.21

⁷¹⁴ For a historical treatment of this phenomenon, see Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, Washington D.C.: Potomac, 2009.

⁷¹⁵ Major James D. Scudieri, “The Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka, 1987-1990: A Case Study in Operations Other Than War,” School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1994-1995, p.21.

⁷¹⁶ Kumar Rupesinghe, “Ethnic Conflicts in South Asia: The Case of Sri Lanka and the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF), *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.25, no.4, 1988, p.350.

construct of units.”⁷¹⁷

Besides the shortcomings faced by the COIN forces, the insurgents enjoyed several advantages on their part. First, unlike the IPKF, the LTTE was fighting on its home turf. Even after the insurgents were pushed out of Jaffna City, they were able to transition to rural guerilla warfare without too much trouble. Second, because they were operating in their own communities, the insurgents enjoyed a much higher level of popular support from the population. Effective propaganda techniques reinforced this level of support. Third, even though the LTTE had discarded some of its weapons as stipulated by the terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, it kept the lion’s share of its arsenal. Moreover, the LTTE was resupplied with weapons from operatives working in Singapore, India’s RAW (working at odds with the Indian military), and even the Sri Lankan government once Sri Lankan president Premadasa requested the immediate departure of the IPKF on June 2, 1989.⁷¹⁸ Most fighters preferred 7.62mm AK-47s and G-3 assault rifles, although some used Chinese T-56s, M-16A1s, and an array of submachine guns (SMGs) and light and heavy machine guns (LMGs and HMGs), including both the American made .30 cal and .50 cal.⁷¹⁹

From a tactical perspective, the LTTE demonstrated remarkable agility and battlefield innovation against the IPKF. To further restrict the movement of the 36th Infantry Division, the insurgents placed IEDs along the most frequently traveled roads used by the COIN forces, including the Trinconmalee Vavuniua-Elephant Pass road, which was the major artery for Indian

⁷¹⁷ Ouellet, p.478.

⁷¹⁸ Ibid, p.477.

⁷¹⁹ Scudieri, “The IPKF in Sri Lanka,” p.23.

personnel, vehicles, and supplies coming into Jaffna City from the port at Trincommalee.⁷²⁰ The IEDs were constructed using plastic cylinders filled with 100 kilos of high grade explosives, buried beneath the road surface, and activated using pull and pressure switches which could be located away from the bomb. The group also used remote control device and electric current to complete the circuit.⁷²¹

The IPKF intervention was a major event in the course of the LTTE's insurgency. While the IPKF was not without its triumphs, including pushing the Tigers out of Jaffna City during Operation Pawan, on balance, "the IPKF actions are nearly universally recognized as a failure."⁷²² The experience gained from fighting Indian troops, at the time the world's fourth largest army, during the thirty-two month interregnum in Tamil-controlled Sri Lanka enhanced the LTTE's effectiveness by providing the group with invaluable experience in urban-rural insurgency.⁷²³

4.4.2.3 Karuna Faction Split (2004)

In early March 2004, Vinayanamoorthy Muralitharan, known as "Colonel Karuna," defected from the LTTE. Karuna took his autonomous, geographically concentrated Eastern Province army with him. The Eastern faction became Tamil makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) and subsequently joined the counterinsurgents in their fight against the LTTE, now mostly a Northern Province organization. Karuna's defection struck a blow to the LTTE's command and

⁷²⁰ Fair, *Urban Battlefields*, p.22

⁷²¹ Ibid.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ Ibid, p.23

control.⁷²⁴ The split sapped the morale of the LTTE and limited its operational effectiveness. Karuna was well-regarded by his peers in the LTTE and rose to a senior rank in the group by conducting successful military operations throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Once his Eastern faction split from the Tigers, the LTTE's ability to conduct conventional operations was severely curtailed.

The rift occurred when Prabhakaran accused Colonel Karuna of corruption. Rather than face Prabhakaran after he was summoned (he feared being killed), Karuna chose to break from the group and form his own organization. After splitting from the LTTE, Karuna's TMVP attacked their former comrades-in-arms. Sri Lankan COIN forces benefited tremendously from TMVP intelligence and manpower in the Eastern Province.⁷²⁵ Karuna led his fighters against LTTE insurgents in the coastal areas of Batticaloa-Ampara in the east. Throughout 2006, the TMVP killed 82 LTTE insurgents while the Tigers only managed to kill 27 TMVP fighters.⁷²⁶

Even for a group with traditionally high levels of fratricide like the LTTE, few could have predicted Karuna's split and even fewer could have predicted the impact it would have on the Tamil Tigers. Since Karuna was known within the group as a hard-liner—he had executed hundreds of prisoners, massacred Muslims in the east of Sri Lanka, and physically coerced child soldiers into joining the group—his defection was *that much more* devastating. The TMVP quickly solidified the hearts and minds of the Tamils in Eastern Province. To achieve this, Karuna disbanded police stations and law courts established by the LTTE, returned land and

⁷²⁴ Niel A. Smith, "Understanding Sri Lanka's Defeat of the Tamil Tigers," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Iss.59, 4th quarter, 2010, pp.40-44.

⁷²⁵ Paul Staniland, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection, and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.56, No.1, 2012, p.30.

⁷²⁶ IHS Jane's World Terrorism and Insurgency, "Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam."

livestock to people who had it confiscated by LTTE insurgents, and abolished LTTE taxes.⁷²⁷ A purely kinetic analysis of Karuna's defection reveals that once his force of 500-600 fighters switched sides, the LTTE began to operate as more of a conventional military, rather than as an insurgent force.⁷²⁸ This strategic miscalculation played directly into the hands of the Sri Lankan COIN forces, which had spent much of the past decade upgrading its conventional forces with the help of China.

4.4.3 Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

4.4.3.1 Indo-Sri Lankan Accord (1987)

The Indo-Sri Lankan Accords of 1987 called for an immediate cessation to hostilities. In accordance with a halt to the fighting, the insurgents were required to disarm and turn over weapons to Sri Lankan authorities at designated spots throughout the country. For its part, India agreed to ban Tamil militants from using its territory as a safe haven while also contributing assets to jointly patrol the Palk Strait with the Sri Lankan Navy (SLN). Per the terms of the agreement, the government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) made the following concessions: troops in the Northern and Eastern Provinces were relegated to their barracks; military bases recently constructed in the Vadaramachchi section of the Jaffna peninsula were shuttered; and finally, Sinhalese "home guard" militias were disarmed.⁷²⁹

In part, the political dimensions of the Accords proved to be the most problematic. The

⁷²⁷ Ibid.

⁷²⁸ Christian Chung, "The Killer Tiger Roared: A Strategic Analysis of Sri Lankan 'Kinetic' Counterinsurgency and its Theoretical Implications," *Small Wars Journal*, December 15, 2010, p.6.

⁷²⁹ Ralph R. Premdas and S.W.R. de A.Samarasinghe, "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict: The Indo-Lanka Peace Accord," *Asian Survey*, 28, no.6, June 1987, pp.680-681.

framework of the agreement, which was intended to resolve the conflict and provide an outline for institutional arrangements for power sharing, contained two controversial declarations. First, the Accords stipulated that Sri Lanka was a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual plural society. Second, the Northern and Eastern Provinces, traditional Tamil homelands, were recognized as the historical habitation of the Tamil-speaking population. On their face, neither of these points should have been contentious. Sri Lanka was obviously a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual plural society comprised of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, and Burghers (descended from the Dutch). All the Accords really did was to frame the policies of bilingualism, the provincial council scheme, and the temporary merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces as the unit of devolution.

But the agreement alienated both the LTTE *and* the JVP. The latter thought the Accords went too far, while the former believed that the agreement did not go far enough. No amount of cajoling by the Indian government could convince Prabhakaran to accept an agreement that enshrined “the unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.” This protected the Sri Lankan state *sui generis* and precluded the possibility of an independent Eelam. As indicated by the Tiruchelvam principles, Section 2 of the constitution entrenched Sri Lanka as a unitary state, and the agreement did nothing to change this. Furthermore, the Thirteenth Amendment dictated that “national policy on all subjects and functions” remained the writ of the central government. In the end, the Indo-Sri Lankan Accords were supposed to address devolution, but the center retained so much power, especially as embodied in the state bureaucracy and the judiciary, that a substantial devolution of power amounted to little more than an abstract.⁷³⁰

For the LTTE, the most lasting impact of the Accords was the deployment of the Indian

⁷³⁰ Neelan Tiruchelvam, “Devolution and the Elusive Quest for Peace,” in Rotberg, *Creating Peace*, p.197.

Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka. Initially greeted with open arms, the IPKF would soon become the main target of the LTTE's ire, as the two sides waged a bitter conflict against each other between 1987 and 1990.

4.4.3.2 The Kumaratunga Accords (1994-1995)

The Kumaratunga Accords were the centerpiece of the Sri Lankan government's attempt at negotiating a peace process beginning in early 1994, following a cease-fire in mid-January. Yet again, the take away from the Kumaratunga Accords was that the LTTE remained hesitant about committing to the process. Without complete LTTE buy-in, and especially without the full-backing of Prabhakaran, no peace effort could succeed. The Tigers were far more concerned with the military effort than the political component of negotiations, but often made unrealistic demands for the Sri Lankan government to abandon certain military positions. Moreover, the LTTE was consistently unwilling to review constitutional proposals.⁷³¹

After only three months, what had been regarded as the most promising effort to end the conflict ended abruptly when the insurgents destroyed two Sri Lankan naval craft and over the next five days destroyed two Sri Lankan air force planes. Perhaps the writing was on the wall. After all, an ominous sign for the ultimate success of the negotiations came very early on when the LTTE triggered a bomb blast that killed over fifty people, including the opposition presidential candidate, Gamini Dissanayake. To be sure, the Sri Lankan government was also culpable for the way it handled the peace accords. Kumaratunga organized an inexperienced staff whose disorganization and lack of overall strategy for dealing with the Tamil population was a major factor in the failure of the talks. Still, the proposals put forth offered the LTTE the

⁷³¹ Teresita C. Schaeffer, "Peacemaking in Sri Lanka: The Kumaratunga Initiative," in Rotberg, *Elusive Peace*, p.133.

most far-reaching benefits of any deal yet. These included a federal system in all but name, resolution of the language issue, and a framework to return to the merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces, to be resolved at some point in the future.

So why did the Tigers leave the deal on the table? Throughout the Kumaratunga Accords, as in previous and future negotiations, the LTTE wanted it all. The group sought an enhanced political status, the preservation of its military positional and the retention of its “quasi-state” in Jaffna, and to avoid making a whole-hearted commitment to the process until it was guaranteed what it wanted. To Prabhakaran, and many in the upper echelon of the insurgency, there was little to gain from negotiations that did not eventually lead to separatism. The fact of the matter is, “LTTE leaders entered the 1995 negotiations as an exploratory measure, to see what might lie down the road, but without having to make any fundamental decision that a successful negotiation was essential.”⁷³² And with negotiations off the table by April 1995, the two sides went back to war.

4.4.3.3 Norwegian Peace Initiative (2002-2008)

In December 2001, the LTTE declared a unilateral cease-fire. Two months later, Prime Minister Wickramasinghe arranged a formal cease-fire, thus paving the way for peace talks between the insurgents and the Sri Lankan government. Over the next two years, the Norwegian government facilitated negotiations between both sides in various locales, including Thailand, Norway, Germany, and Japan. Between April and June 2002, the LTTE rejected the Sri Lankan government’s proposals for an interim administration. The insurgents argued that Colombo’s proposals failed to recognize the political dimensions of the conflict because they provided no

⁷³² Ibid, p.138.

autonomy to the proposed interim institutions.

In October 2003, the LTTE submitted proposals for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) for the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.⁷³³ Some observers believe that the LTTE never seriously considered negotiating an end to the conflict point to Clause 3 of the ISGA. This clause stated that if a final settlement had not been reached and implemented within the five year window immediately following the ratification of the ISGA Agreement, then an independent election commission, appointed by the ISGA, *shall conduct free and fair elections in accordance with international democratic principles and standards under international observation.*⁷³⁴ But buried in the text of the clause was a provision that stipulated the right or power to secede after five years. According to this provision, the LTTE could legitimately claim that an agreement had not been reached, hold an election, declare a separate state, and call for international recognition.⁷³⁵

Another indication the insurgents were not serious about negotiations was an insistence on negotiating an end to the conflict within the framework of the “Thimpu principles.” These principles were first put forth during talks in 1985 and rejected outright by the Sri Lankan government. In short, the “Thimpu principles” called for the recognition of (a) a Tamil homeland; (b) the right of Tamil self-determination; (c) Tamil nationalism as the basis of a solution.⁷³⁶ The Tigers entered the talks declaring that they were willing to negotiate peace talks *without any conditions*; yet somewhere along the way, the LTTE decided to revert back to the

⁷³³ M.A.A.J. Kularatne, “How Do Separatist Insurgents Use Negotiations for Their Growth and Survival?” US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2006, p.79.

⁷³⁴ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, p.189.

⁷³⁵ Ibid.

⁷³⁶ Kularatne, “Negotiations for Growth and Survival,” pp.79-83.

“Thimpu principles,” as a pre-requisite for negotiations.

In conjunction with the peace talks, the LTTE ramped up its propaganda campaign, mostly in an attempt to regain its ebbing popularity within the Tamil community. Following the 9/11 attacks, the LTTE’s diaspora network had come under close scrutiny by Western governments. As a result, the organization’s fundraising network was seriously compromised. In order to account for this shortcoming, the Tigers sought to press their domestic constituency in the Northern and Eastern provinces by demanding more money in taxes, as well as relying on extortion. This alienated members of the Tamil community, who now more than ever hoped for an end to the conflict.

A series of events unfolded over the next several years that would place both sides firmly back on the road to conflict. In March 2003, the LTTE boycotted negotiations and claimed that “excessive internationalization” of the peace process had unfavorably altered the balance of power against it. A year later, in March 2004, the Karuna faction split from the LTTE. This defection enervated the insurgents substantially. With a considerably weakened LTTE, the Sri Lankan government and COIN forces began to reconsider their strategic calculus for engaging in negotiations versus organizing for one last push to defeat the insurgents militarily. In April 2004, the UNF coalition was defeated and a surge of Sinhala nationalist parties consolidated power in parliament. The December 2004 tsunami further complicated peace negotiations, as all international efforts now focused on helping the victims. Although the Sri Lankan government only formally abrogated the CFA in January 2008, the negotiations fell apart long before then. The LTTE resumed its violent activities in 2005 by embarking on a campaign of assassination targeting Tamil politicians and Sri Lankan government intelligence operatives.⁷³⁷ On July 26,

⁷³⁷ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, pp.196-197.

2006, COIN force fighter jets bombed several LTTE camps around Mavil Aru. Eelam War IV had officially begun.

4.4.4 Mutually Hurting Stalemate

4.4.4.1 Eelam War I (1983-1987)

While it is not always easy to pinpoint the start of an insurgency, most scholars believe that the aftermath of the “Black July” riots mark the beginning of the Tamil insurgency against the Sri Lankan state. Initially, the insurgency was inchoate in nature and unfocused in its goals. The LTTE was merely one of several militant Tamil outfits fighting against the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and other elements of the state’s security apparatus. Yet, from very early on, the Tigers fought to position themselves as the preeminent Tamil insurgent group. In 1984, the LTTE began robbing banks in Jaffna to finance its organization. That same year, much in a similar way as the PIRA engaged in self-policing around neighborhoods in Belfast, Prabhakaran’s group began executing suspected traitors by tying them up to lamp posts and shooting them one time in the head.⁷³⁸ “Lamp postings” were a clear sign to the community that the Tigers meant business.

In the nascent stages of an insurgency, the government often fails to recognize the true nature of the threat. In 1984, several incidents took place that should have signaled to the government in Colombo that ongoing violence amounted to more than just aftershocks from the “Black July” riots. In August 1984, a bomb attack claimed by the Tamil Eelam Army (TEA) at the Madras airport in Tamil Nadu killed 30 civilians. Two months later, 11 civilians were injured when the Fort Police station in Colombo was bombed. When India’s Prime Minister

⁷³⁸ Lilja, “Trapping Constituents,” p.313.

Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards that same month, Sri Lankan government authorities grew extremely concerned. Indira Gandhi had been an ardent supporter of the Tamil cause, if for no other reason than the fact that 50 million Tamils living in Tamil Nadu represented a formidable political prize for her Congress Party's electoral base.

With Indira Gandhi now dead, the authorities in Sri Lanka were worried about an even more pro-Tamil politician replacing her. The Jayawardena government recognized the ineptitude of its military counterinsurgency forces. In an effort to crush the various insurgent groups operating throughout the country, the Sri Lankan government hired a private British security firm as well as several Israeli intelligence experts from Mossad.⁷³⁹ Rajiv Gandhi succeeded his mother as the prime minister of India and as a political neophyte, was pliable to domestic influences, including manipulation at the hands of Tamil Nadu politicians like M.G. Ramachandran and domestic Indian security institutions, such as the Research and Analysis Wing, or RAW.

RAW supported the alphabet soup of Tamil insurgent groups (LTTE, TELO, PLOTE, EPRLF, EROS, TELA, ENDLF), and in April 1985 even masterminded the formation of the short-lived Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF), which brought together some of the leading terrorists from these groups. As the LTTE struggled to differentiate itself from the other Tamil groups, a pattern of violence and counter-violence emerged in early 1985, including the Kokkilai offensive in February, which was the first LTTE attack on a Sri Lankan army barrack. Two months later, in April 1985, Tamil groups attacked Sri Lankan Muslims throughout the Eastern Province. Then in May, the LTTE conducted an attack in Anuradhapura that killed over

⁷³⁹ Edgar O'Ballance, *The Cyanide War: Tamil Insurrection in Sri Lanka, 1973-1988*, London: Brassey's, 1990, p.57.

150 Buddhist pilgrims in response to killing of 70 Tamils in Valvettihurai earlier that year.⁷⁴⁰

1985 culminated with a December bomb blast at the home of the LTTE's number two, Anton Balasingham, although he managed to survive unscathed.

A mutually hurting stalemate became apparent very early on. Throughout Eelam War I, neither the COIN force nor the insurgents could muster the strength to subjugate the other. The Tigers demonstrated their potency by conducting high profile attacks at will. In May 1986, an LTTE attack destroyed an Air Lanka plane, killing 17 passengers. This was followed less than a week later by a bomb attack against the Sri Lankan government's central communication office in Colombo, which killed 14 people.⁷⁴¹ By 1986, the LTTE had focused much of its violence on a campaign to consolidate control of the Tamil insurgency. The ranks of the organization swelled as Prabhakaran gave his blessing to begin recruiting women and children. Between April and May of 1986, the LTTE killed 150 TELO members and 70-80 EPRLF insurgents.⁷⁴² The Tigers compiled 600 casualties between 1986 and 1988. TELO was decried as an Indian puppet and subsequently decimated. By the end of 1986, both PLOTE and the EPRLF had been eliminated.

To begin 1987, the SLAF launched several small scale operations aimed at disrupting the insurgency, but the operations had little effect and merely served to elicit counter-reprisals from the LTTE. In April 1987 the Tigers pulled off two devastating attacks. In the first incident, known as the "Good Friday Massacre," the LTTE slaughtered 126 Sinhalese bus passengers and

⁷⁴⁰ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, p.124

⁷⁴¹ Ibid, p.128

⁷⁴² Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.24

injured another 60 in Kituluttuwa, North Central Province.⁷⁴³ That same month, a joint LTTE-EROS operation detonated a car bomb in the capital, killing 113 and injuring over 200.⁷⁴⁴

In response, the COIN forces launched Operation Liberation (Vadamarachchi Operation) from May to June of 1987 in LTTE-controlled Jaffna. By the end of May, the COIN forces had achieved their objective of capturing Velvettiturai, symbolic as Prabhakaran's hometown.

Although the SLAF had secured a partial victory, the LTTE was far from impotent. In June, the insurgents shot 33 people, including 29 Buddhist monks, in Arantalawa in Ampara in Eastern Province. With international pressure mounting to stop the violence, India intervened in an attempt to bring a peaceful end to the four year-old insurgency.⁷⁴⁵

4.4.4.2 Eelam War II (1990-1995)

The Indian Peacekeeping Force intervention began to wind down in 1989. In April, the Premadasa government declared a cease-fire and offered the LTTE a peace package which included amnesty and rehabilitation (LTTE disarmament was not required). The agreement was formalized in June and by October the Sri Lankan government released LTTE prisoners and promised to close down army bases in Thondaimannar, Velvettiturai, and Point Pedro. But even as the Sri Lankan government capitulated to LTTE demands, Prabhakaran never took peace talks seriously. "While maintaining the 'charade' of negotiating a political settlement, the LTTE

⁷⁴³ Barnett R. Rubin, *Cycles of Violence: Human Rights in Sri Lanka Since the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement*, Asia Watch Report, 1987, p.48; K.M. de Silva, *Regional Powers and Small State Security: India and Sri Lanka, 1977-1990*, Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995, p.258.

⁷⁴⁴ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, p.130.

⁷⁴⁵ Refer to section "Indo-Lankan Accords (1987)" in the section on previous attempts at conflict resolution for more on the outcome of the Indian intervention.

prepared for war,” notes Bandarage.⁷⁴⁶ It was a cycle that would repeat itself throughout the course of the insurgency and one that would ultimately undermine the credibility of the moderates within the LTTE’s ranks.

In March 1990, the IPKF withdrew its troops from Sri Lanka. The resulting power vacuum led to the beginning of Eelam War II in June 1990. The LTTE used Premadasa’s refusal to repeal the 6th amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution to dissolve the North East Provincial Council (NEPC) and officially end negotiations. The opening year of Eelam War II got off to a bloody start. The SLAF enjoyed some early successes, capturing Mannar and several islands near Jaffna. But for the most part, the LTTE’s violence characterized the opening stage of Eelam War II. In June 1990, the Tigers killed the EPRLF’s leader, Padmanabha, and also slaughtered 600 Sinhalese and Muslim policemen, who were lured with an offer of safe passage by the LTTE on their way to Colombo.⁷⁴⁷

From June to July of 1990, the LTTE fought Sri Lankan COIN forces in the Battle of Kokavil.⁷⁴⁸ After two weeks of intense fighting, the insurgents prevented the SLAF soldiers from resupplying themselves with food, water, and ammunition. The insurgents eventually captured the military camp, but the COIN forces would not have to wait long for a victory. Shortly after losing at the Battle of Kokavil, the Sri Lankan Air Force launched Operation Eagle, which resupplied and rescued critically wounded soldiers from the old Dutch fort at Jaffna. The operation was widely hailed as a success, providing the COIN forces with a much –needed morale boost at a time when LTTE victories seemed to dominate the headlines.

⁷⁴⁶ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, p.153.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ For more on the Battle of Kokavil, see <http://sundaytimes.lk/001001/plus4.html>, site accessed February 18, 2012.

Two months after the Battle of Kokavil, in August 1990, the insurgents turned their attention toward Sri Lanka's Muslim community. In early August, the LTTE killed 122 Muslims in Eravur, Easter Province and punctuated this assault three months later by expelling between 75,000 and 100,000 Muslims from Jaffna in a blatant campaign of ethnic cleansing.⁷⁴⁹ In between those two incidents, further evidence of a stalemate came in the form of Operation Sea Breeze, which was a combined military operation launched by the COIN forces in Mullaitivu, the first amphibious operation launched by the Sri Lankan armed forces in their history. The result was a successful breakthrough of a LTTE siege in which the COIN force was able to resupply its Army camp.

Eight insurgents were arrested in January 1991 as they attempted to smuggle 3,000 liters of petrol through Puddukotai and Ramanathapuram. While it was not apparent at the time, it is now clear that the LTTE was stockpiling resources, including bomb making materials, in preparation for a campaign of high-profile attacks. In March 1991, a suicide car bomb killed the Sri Lankan Defense Minister, Ranjan Wijeratna. But the most significant attack of Eelam War II and some argue of the entire insurgency, was executed in May 1991 when a young woman named Dhanu detonated an explosive belt, killing herself, seventeen bystanders, and her intended target, the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.⁷⁵⁰ Gandhi's assassination was major turning point in the LTTE's relations with India, both the state and its population. From May 1991 on, the Tigers stepped up their effort to expand internationally and sought external sources of weapons, money, and safe haven. The Tigers followed up their assassination of Gandhi by bombing the Sri Lankan government's Joint Operations Command Center in Colombo in June

⁷⁴⁹ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, p.153.

⁷⁵⁰ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.29.

1991.⁷⁵¹

The COIN forces soon realized, correctly, that they needed to answer the LTTE's assassination and bombing campaign with some serious firepower. From July to August 1991, the SLAF deployed nearly 11,000 troops to fight against the insurgents in the First Battle of Elephant Pass. Between 500 and 1,000 insurgents were killed as the Sri Lankan army gained control of the strategically important strip of land that linked the northern mainland, known as Wanni, with the Jaffna Peninsula. From 14 July through 9 August, the COIN forces executed Operation Balavegaya, their most successful operation of the entire second phase of the insurgency. The amphibious assault helped the SLAF win the First Battle of Elephant Pass and further develop its ability to conduct joint operations.

As the Sri Lankan military built up its maritime and amphibious capabilities, the LTTE also expanded its operations on the seas. In November 1991, an Indian Navy vessel detained the *Tongonova*, a small LTTE-owned freighter, off the coast of Karaikal. The *Tongonova* carried arms and ammunition, Mh-2 transmitters, 13,000 liters of diesel, 10,000 liters of petrol, and explosives while en route to Jaffna.⁷⁵² The arrest of Ravi (aka Ravichandran) and 18 others in December 1991 demonstrated the LTTE's desire to reestablish its sanctuary in Tamil Nadu, as well as its attempts to forge links with militant groups operating in India. Two of these groups were the People's War Group (PWG) of Maoists and the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK).⁷⁵³

The back-and-forth between the insurgents and the COIN forces continued during the summer of 1992. In June, the SLAF advanced on Tellipalai while the Sri Lankan Navy

⁷⁵¹ Ibid, pp.154-155.

⁷⁵² Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.27.

⁷⁵³ Ibid, pp.32-33. Sympathy for the LTTE increased following India's formal declaration of the group as a terrorist organization in September 1992.

destroyed two Sea Tiger bases off the coast of Jaffna. To strike back, the LTTE assassinated two Sri Lankan generals and eight other soldiers with an IED on Kayts Island. In that attack, Lt. Gen. Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Commander of Northern Operations, and Brig. Gen. Vijaya Wimalratne, were both murdered.⁷⁵⁴ But an even more high profile attack occurred in November 1992 when the LTTE killed the Sri Lankan Navy Chief, Vice Adm. Clancy Fernando. That same month, the insurgents massacred Muslim and Sinhalese farmers in the Polonnaruwa district near Batticaloa, killing 161 civilians, as well as eight soldiers and twelve policemen.⁷⁵⁵

The LTTE suffered a devastating loss in January 1993 when one of the group's top cadres, known as Kittu, killed himself after the ship he was traveling on was intercepted by the Indian Navy off the coast of Madras. The four hundred ton ship, the M.V. *Yahata*, was carrying 25,000 liters of petrol as well as arms and explosives destined for the Tigers. In retaliation for the death of Kittu, the LTTE ramped up its assassination campaign of high-ranking Sri Lankan officials. In April 1993, the Tigers assassinated Sri Lanka's former National Security Minister, Athulathmudali, at a rally in the capital. An even bigger blow came two weeks later when, on May 1st, an LTTE suicide bomber from the group's elite Black Tigers unit detonated an explosive-laden vest at an election rally in Colombo.⁷⁵⁶

To stem the tide of the insurgents and gain the upper hand, the COIN forces initiated the Yal Devi offensive in September 1993. The offensive sought to take control of insurgent-held territory from Elephant Pass to Kilali and seal off routes across the Jaffna lagoon all the way to

⁷⁵⁴ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.36.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, p.155.

the Jaffna peninsula. But rather than occupy the area, the SLAF destroyed 120 insurgent swamp boats and outboard motors before retreating back to its military base at Elephant Pass.⁷⁵⁷

To close out the year, the LTTE planned to counter the COIN forces' Yali Dev offensive and reverse some of its losses. In November 1993, the two sides fought the Battle of Pooneryn. This two day skirmish saw the LTTE overrun the Sri Lankan naval base in Pooneryn, located in the north of the country, leading to the death of approximately 600 Sri Lankan troops. By the end of 1993, nearly one-third of the Sri Lankan Navy had been destroyed.⁷⁵⁸ Still, the insurgents had suffered great losses as well. In 1993 alone, the Tigers had lost Kittu, as well as Gopalaswami Mahendrarajah (aka Mahatiya) and Yogaratnam (aka Yogi), two high-ranking cadres whose leadership during the IPKF insurgency had been critical.⁷⁵⁹ Undeterred, the LTTE shifted its focus to employing its specialized units to greater effect. In September 1994, the Sea Tigers destroyed a Sri Lankan navy offshore patrol vessel, the *Sagarwardene*.⁷⁶⁰

A new era was ushered in with the November 1994 election of Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, the head of the People's Alliance (PA). As the LTTE continued a wave of fratricidal killings, eliminating Tiger cadres judged to be too close to India's intelligence services, President Kumaratunga undertook one of the most ambitious attempts at peace in the history of the conflict. Fulfilling her campaign promises, throughout late 1994 and early 1995 Kumaratunga engaged the LTTE in the most earnest negotiations since the Indo-Lanka Accord

⁷⁵⁷ V. Jayanth, "A Big Offensive: The Kilali March," *Frontline*, 5 November 1993, pp.32-33.

⁷⁵⁸ Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind: Prabhakaran, The First Profile of the World's Most Ruthless Guerilla Leader*, 6th edition, Sri Lanka: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2008, p.252.

⁷⁵⁹ Joshi, "On the Razor's Edge," p.36.

⁷⁶⁰ W. Alejandro Sanchez Nieto, "A War of Attrition: Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.19, Iss.4, December 2008, p.580.

of 1987. The negotiations broke down on April 19, 1995, when the LTTE sabotaged 2 Sri Lankan Navy gun boats, resulting in the death of 22 sailors and destroyed an additional five Sri Lankan Air Force planes.⁷⁶¹

4.4.4.3 Eelam War III (1995-2001)

The breakdown of the Kumaratunga peace talks initiated an insurgent-led offensive that included a string of bombings and shootings over the next several weeks, resulting in the death of 264 security personnel and 57 civilians throughout the North and East of the country.⁷⁶² On May 25, 1995, the LTTE perpetrated the Kallarawa massacre, in which insurgents murdered 42 Sinhalese civilians, including women and children, in a small fishing village on the Eastern seaboard of Sri Lanka.⁷⁶³ In July, the COIN forces launched a major military offensive to retake the Jaffna Peninsula. The offensive failed to displace the insurgents, but it did have the unintended effect of causing mass refugee flows, as civilians escaping the violence moved east to Vanni.

With many civilians now outside of Jaffna, the Sri Lankan Armed Forces hoped to capitalize on gains from its July offensive. In October 1995, the SLAF conducted a combined military operation code named Operation Riviresa.⁷⁶⁴ Insurgent to COIN force deaths were 4:1, and when the forty-nine day battle ended, the Sri Lankan military had captured Jaffna city and

⁷⁶¹ Schaffer, "The Kumaratunga Initiative," in Rotberg, p.132.

⁷⁶² Bandarage, *Separatist Conflict*, pp.162-164.

⁷⁶³ Chris Kamalendran, "Lighting a Candle in the Storm," *The Sunday Times*, 4 October 1998.

⁷⁶⁴ Operation Riviresa was preceded by Operation Leap Forward and Operation Thunder Strike, both conducted to pave the way for the more comprehensive Operation Riviresa, which involved 20,000 Sri Lankan troops. A detailed analysis of Operation Riviresa can be found in Edward J. Amato, "Tail of the Dragon: Sri Lankan Efforts to Subdue the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam," U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2002.

extended its writ throughout most of the peninsula.⁷⁶⁵ The Sri Lankan victory came at a high cost. During the fighting, the LTTE broke through the SLAF formation and ignited two oil installations in Colombo. Furthermore, the Tigers continued a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing against both Sinhalese and Muslim civilians. By the end of the year, an estimated 130,000 civilians had been displaced as a result of the violence and were living in over 90 refugee camps scattered throughout Northern Province.⁷⁶⁶

With its Jaffna sanctuary under attack, the LTTE took its war out of the North and East and into other parts of the country. In January 1996, the insurgents unleashed a series of bombings and assassinations, including a bomb blast at the Colombo Central Bank which killed 90 civilians and injured an additional 1,400.⁷⁶⁷ In July, the Tigers attacked an Army base at Mullativu, killing 1,200 Sri Lankan soldiers, including the Jaffna commander. That same month, the LTTE bombed a train in Dehiwala, resulting in the death of between 60 and 70 civilians. Neither side—insurgents nor COIN force—could break the stalemate. In May 1997, Sri Lankan military operations against the LTTE in Vanni and Mullativu had little effect, other than enraging the Tigers. The LTTE exacted revenge on 15 October 1997 when it bombed the Colombo World Trade Center. This attack killed 15 and wounded 105, but the psychological damage it inflicted was immeasurable. Another major attack occurred in January 1998 when a four-man LTTE Black Tiger squad detonated a car bomb outside of the Temple of the Tooth, a sacred Buddhist shrine in Kandy.⁷⁶⁸ Though the attack only managed to kill seven and injure

⁷⁶⁵ http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/5/newsid_4618000/4618661.stm

⁷⁶⁶ US Committee for Refugees, “The People in Between: Sri Lankans Face Long-Term Displacement,” Washington DC, March 1996, pp.1-5.

⁷⁶⁷ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/51435.stm

⁷⁶⁸ http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/database/data_suicide_killings.htm

another 25, it was highly symbolic in nature.

It is important to keep in perspective the number of people killed in LTTE attacks. While in some insurgencies, to kill 10 members of the enemy in one attack is considered an overwhelming success, the Tigers sought for and achieved a much higher casualty threshold. In March 1998, LTTE suicide bomb killed 36 and injured an additional 250 to 300 people. Two months later, the Black Tigers assassinated Sarojini Yogeswaran, Jaffna's mayor, and Brig. Gen. Wijeratne. In September 1998, the two sides faced off in the Battle of Kilinochchi. COIN forces captured Mankulam, although the LTTE launched Operation Unceasing Waves II, an offensive that allowed it to recapture a supply route and several villages. Perhaps one of the most devastating blows to a possible peace deal came on July 29, 1999 when Neelan Tiruchelvam, a TULF politician and the architect of the devolution process, was killed in Colombo by a suicide bomber. A mere two months later, in September, the insurgents murdered 54 ethnic Sinhalese in retaliation for a Sri Lankan Air Force bombing that had killed 22 Tamils weeks earlier.

With no end to the violence in sight, the LTTE succeeded in regaining valuable ground from the COIN forces with the military triumph of the Oddusuddan offensive in October and November of 1999, followed by the Second Battle of Elephant Pass in April 2000. To complete its string of spectacular attacks against the Sri Lankan armed forces, the LTTE simultaneously attacked the Katunayake Air force base and the adjacent Bandaranaike Airport in July 2001.

4.4.5 Decision-Making Structure and Process

4.4.5.1 Suicide Terrorism and the ‘Cult of Martyrdom’

In contemporary terrorism research, suicide terrorism has been over-associated with Islam and groups like Al-Qaida, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). As in most cultures, the topic of suicide terrorism as a tactic of warfare is a matter of debate for Tamils, Hindus, and Sri Lankans alike. But what it is not a matter of debate, is that these attacks were extremely successful. Beyond the immense psychological damage inflicted by the Black Tigers, LTTE suicide attacks “hindered the Sri Lankan government’s ability to plan and execute COIN operations by eliminating the nation’s senior military and political leadership, damaging the economy and crippling the population’s morale.”⁷⁶⁹ Furthermore, for the Tigers, suicide attacks functioned at both the tactical and the strategic level.⁷⁷⁰ While they were clearly useful in eliminating LTTE rivals, suicide bombing was a strategic decision undertaken by Prabhakaran and the Tiger leadership in order to force the government to the negotiating table in hopes of gaining the ultimate concession—an independent Tamil Eelam.⁷⁷¹ Perhaps more importantly, suicide bombing helped create a culture of martyrdom within the organization. This culture would help sustain the LTTE and contributed to its longevity through building popular support and elevating suicide bombers to the status of great heroes (*maha veerer*), or more appropriately, martyrs within the Tamil community.

⁷⁶⁹ Raj Vijayasiri, “A Critical Analysis of the Sri Lankan Government’s Counterinsurgency Campaign” (master’s thesis, For Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1990), p.20.

⁷⁷⁰ I am thankful to Dr. Michael Echemendia for pointing this out.

⁷⁷¹ Mia Bloom, “Ethnic Conflict, State Terror, and Suicide Bombing in Sri Lanka,” *Civil Wars*, 6:1, 2003, p.54.

The first LTTE suicide attack was executed by “Captain Miller” on 5 July 1987.⁷⁷² The attack was directed at a Sri Lankan army camp in Vadamarachi and resulted in the death of 70 Sri Lankan soldiers.⁷⁷³ The inspiration for the attack came from Hizballah, a group the Tigers came into contact with when LTTE fighters were sent to Lebanon to train with the PLO and other militant groups in the Bekaa Valley in the mid-1980s. July 5th is now celebrated as “Black Tiger’s Day,” to promote the death of the group’s first self-martyr. In Sri Lanka, martyrdom encompasses public displays of commemoration like “Black Tiger’s Day,” but also newspaper articles, special commemorative albums, monuments and statues. Suicide terrorism expert Robert Pape has observed that the “expectation of community support is a key reason so many individuals are willing to commit suicide for the Tamil Tigers. Those who carried out suicide attacks for the LTTE attached great importance to how the community would interpret and remember their actions.”⁷⁷⁴

Several schools of thought exist on exactly why the LTTE made the strategic decision to adopt suicide bombing in their campaign against the Sri Lankan state. Pape argues that the fear of religious persecution initially drove the Tigers to adopt this method of terrorism as a tactic. According to this view, the Tamil community was convinced that the Sinhalese government was deliberately pursuing policies designed to exterminate the Tamil culture and snuff out the true essence of Tamil national identity. Ironically, Buddhism was the driving force behind this repression. Although the LTTE was an avowedly secular group, for the most part, it did in fact incorporate traditional Hindu themes of self-sacrifice, asceticism, and obligation to justify and

⁷⁷² Also seen as Millar, with an “a,” instead of Miller, with an “e.”

⁷⁷³ Pape, *Dying to Win*, p.142.

⁷⁷⁴ Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, New York: Random House, 2005, p.143.

promote the use of martyrdom within the community.⁷⁷⁵

Bloom's research, on the other hand, finds that the LTTE initially decided to wage a campaign of suicide terrorism in order to distinguish itself from the various Tamil groups operating in Sri Lanka throughout the 1980s. Whatever the reason, Prabhakaran wanted it done and the "cult-like" behavior of the organization allowed it to take root with relatively little debate. Once suicide terrorism was accepted, the notion of martyrdom became an intrinsic element of Tamil culture. Michael Horowitz, on the other hand, explains the LTTE's decision to adopt suicide terrorism through the lens of adoption-capacity theory. In contrast to groups like the PIRA and ETA, the LTTE's broad tactical setup and less clearly defined critical tasks made it easier for the Tigers to adopt and successfully employ suicide bombing as an effective weapon.⁷⁷⁶

The ability to conduct successful suicide attacks, particularly those executed as part of a more comprehensive strategy, are evidence of the LTTE's position on the higher end of the organizational development spectrum.⁷⁷⁷ The Black Tigers were the group's elite suicide units, comprised of both men and women who launched attacks on land, sea, and air. To date, the Black Tigers are responsible for more suicide attacks than all Palestinian groups *combined*. Between 1987 and 2001, the group launched 76 suicide attacks, and count over 200 suicide terrorist incidents over the course of its existence. Tacit knowledge played a significant role in the LTTE's ability to execute increasingly lethal suicide operations. Obviously, the insurgent

⁷⁷⁵ Bruce Hoffman and Gordon H. McCormick, "Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 27:4, 2004, p.254.

⁷⁷⁶ Michael C. Horowitz, *The Diffusion of Military Power: Causes and Consequence for International Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, p.12.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid, p.251.

who acts as a human bomb is no longer of any use to the group, since the individual is killed when the device explodes. Yet, because of the frequency with which this tactic was employed, LTTE bomb makers were able to learn what worked and what did not. Tacit knowledge is about more than just learning how to use a technology, the overall intent is learning how to use technologies or execute technologies to the greatest effect. Insurgents are unable to do this strictly through explicit knowledge.⁷⁷⁸

As detailed in Table 9 (below), suicide attacks were directed against a range of political, military, and economic targets. In addition to achieving specific tactical objectives through the attacks, according to Pape, “the Tamil Tigers also achieved significant coercive success, twice compelling the Sri Lankan government to engage in serious sovereignty negotiations.”⁷⁷⁹

Table 5: Prominent LTTE Suicide Attacks, 1987-2002⁷⁸⁰

Date	Target	Purpose	Remarks
1987	Tamil University taken over by SLAF	Destroy strategic military location	Attack modeled on the 1983 Hizballah truck bombing in Beirut; 75 people died in the assault
1991	Rajiv Ghandi (Indian prime minister)	Political assassination	Ghandi was assassinated for his decision to curtail Indian support for the LTTE and lead a peacekeeping force to stabilize the situation in Jaffna. This is the only act of concerted terrorism that the LTTE has carried out beyond the Sri Lankan theater. Eleven others were killed in the attack.
1991	Joint Operations Center	Destroy strategic military	The blast killed over 20,

⁷⁷⁸ Horacio R. Trujillo and Brian A. Jackson, “Identifying and Exploiting Group Learning Patterns,” in Hsinchun Chen, Edna Reid, Joshua Sinai, Andrew Silke, and Boaz Ganor, eds., *Terrorism Informatics: Knowledge Management and Data Mining for Homeland Security*, New York: Springer Science and Media, 2008, pp.179-180.

⁷⁷⁹ Pape, *Dying to Win*, p.139.

⁷⁸⁰ Rabasa et al., *Beyond al-Qaeda Part 2: The Outer Rings of the Terrorist Universe*, pp.74-75.

	(JOC), Ministry of Defense	location	wounded 50, and destroyed vehicles as far away as 300 yards from the JOC premises.
1993	Ranasinghe Premadasa (Sri Lankan president)	Political assassination	Premadasa was killed by a deep penetration mole who had been on the presidential staff for several years. He was targeted for his endorsement of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord. The attack killed 17 and wounded over 60.
1994	Gamini Dissanyake (opposition leader running in the 1994 presidential elections)	Political assassination	Dissanyake was targeted for his key role in arranging the details of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord; an additional 50 people were killed in the attack (which bore strong resemblances to the Ghandi assassination)
1995	Naval gunboats (SLNS <i>Suraya</i> and SLNS <i>Ranasuru</i>)	Destroy strategic naval asset	Both ships were completely destroyed in the twin assaults, which left 11 sailors dead (the two ships were berthed with skeleton crews at the time of the strikes). It has been speculated that al-Qaeda's attack on the <i>USS Cole</i> was modeled on this operation.
1995	Ceylon Petroleum Corporation oil facility	Destroy strategic economic target	Four oil storage tanks were destroyed, triggering one of the largest fires ever seen in Colombo. Twenty-one persons were killed in the operation.
1996	Central Bank	Destroy strategic economic target	This is the most destructive act of terrorism to have ever taken place in Sri Lanka, killing 91 and injuring in excess of 1,400
1997	Colombo World Trade Center	Destroy strategic economic target	The WTC was hit just one week after it opened. The attack, which killed 15 and injured over 100, was thought to be in retaliation for the US decision to designate the LTTE as a terrorist organization (the bombing is one of the few conducted by the Tigers that has made no attempt to limit foreign casualties).
1999	Chandrika Kumaratunga (Sri Lankan president)	Political assassination	Kumaratunga was targeted for her hard-line stance against

			the LTTE and (then) refusal to negotiate with the group. Although the president survived the attack, which was carried out by a male Black Tiger dressed as a woman, she suffered damage to her face and lost her right eye. Fourteen other people were killed, including a top officer in charge of Kumaratunga's security.
2001	Bandaranaike International Airport	Destroy strategic economic target and hub of critical transportation infrastructure	Twenty-six civil and military aircraft were destroyed in the attack; it is estimated that losses to Sri Lankan Airways exceeded \$350 million.

An interesting note about the attacks listed in Table 9 (above) and one that lends credence to Pape's argument about the salience of the religious difference between the Tamils and Sinhalese as a motivating factor, is the complete absence of suicide attacks directed against Indian forces during the Indian Peacekeeping Force's (IPKF) occupation of Sri Lanka from July 1987 to April 1990. By March 1988, the Indians had deployed over 100,000 troops to Sri Lanka (nearly three times the size of the entire SLAF) and throughout the roughly three year occupation, the IPKF killed between 3,000 and 4,000 civilians, raped Tamil women, and used air power and heavy artillery with wanton disregard, leading to the depopulation of large areas and untold collateral damage.⁷⁸¹ Despite this, the LTTE never launched a suicide attack against the IPKF on Sri Lankan soil.

All told, LTTE suicide attacks killed over 900 people, including two heads of state. Interestingly, and in contrast to Palestinian groups that have relied on suicide terrorism, most LTTE suicide attacks were carried out by women. From an operational standpoint, women more

⁷⁸¹ Pape, *Dying to Win*, p.152.

easily evaded detection at checkpoints and were able to get closer to their victims than LTTE men could have. Moreover, within the organization, women were viewed as “tougher and more willing to sacrifice for the cause.”⁷⁸²

4.4.5.2 Role of Women

As with all decisions made by the LTTE, Prabhakaran had to agree that allowing women to take a more prominent role within the organization was a smart idea. Once females began to prove themselves on the battlefield, however, the decision was an easy one. Women comprised approximately 15-20% of the LTTE’s entire organization. While initially women were relegated to the traditional gender roles of females in terrorist organizations—propaganda, medicine, intelligence, recruitment, and fundraising—during the 1990s female Tiger members assumed combat-related roles.⁷⁸³

The motivation of women for joining the LTTE varied, but similar themes emerged as to why they ultimately made the decision to accept combat missions. First, many women were enraged at the COIN forces for killing or injuring their family members. This reinforced the narrative of communal suffering, oppression, and an overall sense of injustice at the hands of the Sri Lankan state. Second, many women associated their acceptance into the group as a sign of female emancipation. As Schalk notes, women who participated in violent struggle believed that

⁷⁸² Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, p.77.

⁷⁸³ Miranda Alison, “Cogs in the Wheel? Women in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam,” *Civil Wars*, 6:4, 2003, pp.38-39.

they would be afforded a higher status in a future society at peace.⁷⁸⁴ Third, many women joined the LTTE as a response to sexual violence they experienced, either harassment or rape from the Sri Lankan forces or the Indian Peacekeeping Force. Finally, some women were angered by the disruption of their everyday lives, particularly their attempt to earn an education.⁷⁸⁵ Restrictions on movement, including curfews, and periodic displacement prevented many women from finishing school, thus limiting their future options in society at large.

4.4.6 Why did the LTTE refuse to negotiate?

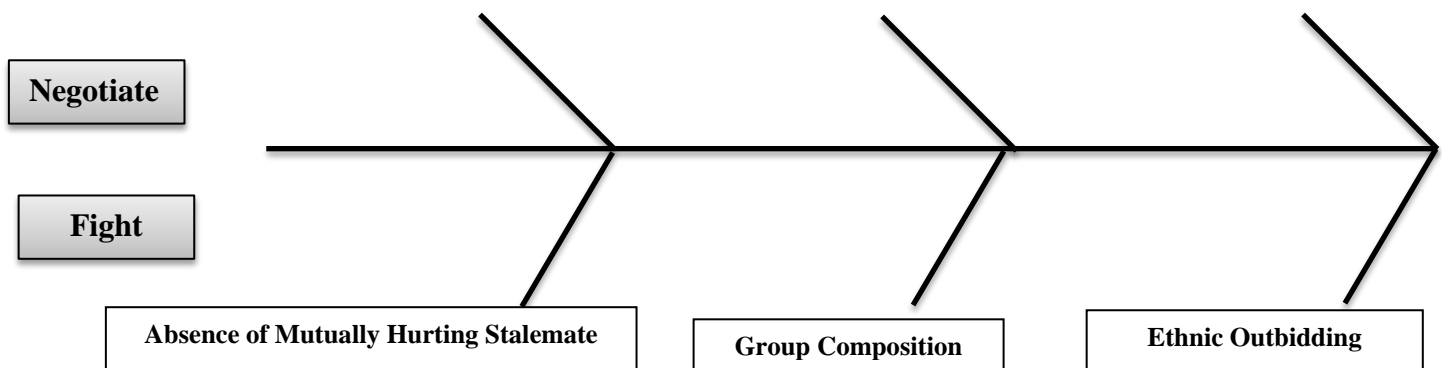


Figure 13: LTTE Negotiation Factors

With the breakdown of the Norwegian-led peace process in 2006, and “Colonel Karuna” now siding with the Sri Lankan government, the COIN forces and the LTTE went back to war in late July. After the insurgents cut off water to the paddy fields surrounding Mavil Aru, COIN force jets attacked LTTE camps in the area. Bitter fighting ensued and continued to ebb and flow over

⁷⁸⁴ Peter Schalk, “Women Fighters of the Liberation Tigers in Tamil Ilam, the Martial Feminism of Atel Palacinkam,” *South Asia Research*, Vol.14, No.2, Autumn 1994, pp.163-183.

⁷⁸⁵ Alison, “Cogs in the Wheel?” p.42.

the next two years. In March 2007, the LTTE's Air Tigers struck a COIN force airbase in Katunayake. This was the first recorded insurgent air strike without the assistance of an external state supporter in history. "Colonel Karuna's" defection provided the Sri Lankan government and military with a treasure trove of intelligence while serving the dual purpose of attenuating the strength of the group. With Karuna and his troops no longer defending the East, but instead helping to overtake it, the COIN forces captured Sampur, Vakaraï, and other parts of the Eastern province. Between 2008 and 2009, the COIN forces launched an offensive in the northern part of the island and won the Battle of Kilinochchi in the Eastern theatre, effectively tightening the noose on the LTTE's top leadership.⁷⁸⁶ The Tigers' demise was cemented on May 18, 2009 when Prabhakaran was killed in fighting near Nandikadal Lagoon in northeastern Sri Lanka.

Since the defeat of the LTTE after thirty plus years of war, numerous articles have been written debating the merits of Sri Lanka's counterinsurgency campaign during Eelam War IV. But perhaps a more important question, and certainly one more germane to this study, is *why didn't the LTTE negotiate?* To answer that question, it is important to examine the analytic framework constructed in this research to discern what variables might provide a sound conclusion. To be sure, there is no one overarching reason why the insurgents continued to fight. Indeed, to those following the conflict closely, there were important indicators suggesting that the Sri Lankan government had gained the upper hand in the last years of the war.

Following 9/11, the LTTE's financial architecture came under increasing scrutiny, limiting the amount of funding the group received for weapons and sustainment. Furthermore,

⁷⁸⁶ In an interesting paper, Albert Wesley Harris utilized prospect theory to analyze the LTTE's decision to mount a stand at Kilinochchi. He concludes that the insurgents preferred to accept the risk of losing the battle, incurring significant casualties, and potentially losing the war in return for the chance that they could win the battle and turn the tide of the war. See Albert Wesley Harris, "Insurgency Decision-making under Conditions of Risk," *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, Vol.4, No.3, 2012, pp.43-47.

Karuna's defection constrained the Tigers geographically, relegating the insurgents to the Northern part of the country. The LTTE's refusal to negotiate a peaceful end to the conflict is best explained by analyzing a combination of sub-variables, which can help shed light on different elements of the group's operational and organizational tools, as well as its strategic decision-making process. Because the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state were locked in an asymmetric process of negotiations, both parties spent an equal amount of time during each of the stages displayed above, with unequal amounts of gains and losses sustained during the various outcomes of those stages.⁷⁸⁷ The result is asymmetrical expectations of victory. As Zartman notes, the greater the structural imbalance between the parties involved, the more likely it is that "elements other than negotiation," in this case war, will ultimately determine the outcome.⁷⁸⁸

Of all the reasons why the LTTE never experienced a tipping point toward negotiation, none is more apparent than the issue of group composition, most notably the leadership. Like the conflict in Northern Ireland, the insurgency in Sri Lanka was affected by Gladwell's notion of the "Law of the Few." However, instead of working to produce a positive outcome, Prabhakaran remained the ultimate obstructionist up until his death. Indeed, Prabhakaran was the quintessential hard-liner, a true ideologue who believed in the utility of violence and the futility of negotiations to achieve victory. For the LTTE's leader, compromise was equal to an act of treason. The conflict was always viewed in zero-sum terms. Prabhakaran considered any gain for the government in Colombo as a net loss for the Tamils. During each of the three primary

⁷⁸⁷ For more on the micro-cycle of asymmetric bargaining power, specifically with regard to access to resources, see Benedikt Korf, "Rethinking the Greed-Grievance Nexus: Property Rights and the Political Economy of War in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.42, No.2, 2005, pp.201-217.

⁷⁸⁸ I. William Zartman, *The 50 Percent Solution*, New Haven: Yale University, Press, 1983, pp.120-121.

respites in the fighting—the 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord, the Kumaratunga Accords in 1994-1995, and the Norwegian facilitated peace initiative of 2002-2008—Prabhakaran and the LTTE continued to plan, train, and equip guerilla fighters. “For Prabhakaran, ceasefires and negotiations were merely tactics to give the LTTE time to rest, rearm, and prepare for the next round of war until it achieved an independent Eelam,” according to Mitchell B. Reiss.⁷⁸⁹

During the Indo-Lanka Accords, Prabhakaran agreed to “fully cooperate” with the terms, which included surrendering weapons (not including those needed for personal security) and ceasing its campaign of violence.⁷⁹⁰ Yet, on October 3, 1987, the Sri Lankan navy interdicted an LTTE arms shipment in the Jaffna harbor. Prabhakaran never took negotiations seriously and believed the Tigers could use cessations of violence for growth and survival as the group prepared for the next interregnum.

During the negotiations with the Kumaratunga government, Prabhakaran and the Sri Lankan president exchanged letters that led to a cease-fire and an ensuing six month dialogue. This would have been difficult to imagine only a year prior, when the LTTE’s military campaign had Colombo on the ropes, and Prabhakaran openly declared, “We are firmly convinced that the creation of an independent sovereign state of Tamil Eelam is the only and final solution to the Tamil national question. Our position is well known to the enemy and the world.”⁷⁹¹ Nevertheless, Balasingham urged Prabhakaran that it was “politically prudent” and in the interest of the Tamil population for the LTTE to engage in dialogue with Kumaratunga’s government.⁷⁹² Prabhakaran’s mistrust of the government and the military proved to be the deciding factor in

⁷⁸⁹ Mitchell B. Reiss, *Negotiating with Evil: When to Talk to Terrorists*, New York: Open Road, 2010, p.224.

⁷⁹⁰ Swamy, *Elusive Mind*, p.177.

⁷⁹¹ Ibid, p.251.

⁷⁹² Ibid.

abandoning the peace process. In April 1995, after putting forth a series of outrageous demands that he knew the Sri Lankan government and military could not meet, Prabhakaran broke the cease-fire and ordered the attacks that would signal the end of the peace negotiations and the beginning of Eelam War III.

In addition to leadership, a second significant factor in the LTTE's unwillingness to negotiate was the absence of a prolonged mutually hurting stalemate. Each time the insurgents suffered major losses, either in terms of personnel, territory, or resources, they were able to regroup and continue fighting. The LTTE never viewed negotiations as necessary for victory. Prabhakaran and his leadership cadre always believed that victory could be achieved through military means. The command and control structure of the organization reinforced this belief. The LTTE was a highly authoritarian organization. Once negotiations were interpreted as placing constraints on the guerillas freedom of action, the response was not compromise but recidivism, or a return to terrorism and violence.⁷⁹³ Prabhakaran refused to tolerate dissent, so those who disagreed with his worldview were eliminated from his inner circle. After purging those whose view did not complement his own, he was able to surround himself with a close-knit group of "yes men" who reinforced his belief that the only way to achieve the group's objectives was through violence—and violence alone. The government and security forces would be defeated on the battlefield, not at the negotiating table.

Of course, not all of the blame for a failure to negotiate can be placed squarely on the shoulders of the LTTE. A third reason why the insurgents failed to negotiate an end to the conflict was a pervasive climate of Sinhala chauvinism in the Sri Lankan political system. This

⁷⁹³ Sukayana Podder, "Challenges to Peace Negotiations: The Sri Lanka Experience," *Strategic Analysis*, Vol.30, No.3, July-September 2006, p.579.

chauvinism or ultra-nationalism was often the result of what Neil Devotta terms “ethnic outbidding,” which he describes as an “auction-like process wherein politicians create platforms and programmes to ‘outbid’ their opponents on their ‘anti-minority’ stance.”⁷⁹⁴ While this was a factor at various times throughout the Northern Ireland conflict, in Sri Lanka, the problem of ethnic outbidding was particularly acute. So just as Prabhakaran was absolute in his demands for an independent Tamil Eelam, his opponents in the majority Sinhalese community were just as adamant in their opposition to any proposal that promoted devolution of power to the Tamils. The result of this behavior was that whenever a peace-minded government came to power, i.e. the Kumaratunga administration, the opposition party sought to paint the government as weak on security and bending to the wishes of the terrorists.

When Sinhala nationalist parties ratcheted up their extreme rhetoric, the LTTE concluded that none of these political organizations were prepared to recognize even the most fundamental issues regarding the prospect of Tamil independence. This process of ethnic outbidding was not reserved strictly for the Sinhalese though. Before eliminating all of its rivals, the LTTE consistently attempted to portray itself as the vanguard of the Tamil people and the only Tamil party willing to fight for the independence of Tamil Eelam.

To recap, the three main reasons why the LTTE did not negotiate an end to the conflict in Sri Lanka were leadership, the absence of a mutually hurting stalemate, and a process of ethnic outbidding which took root in both the Tamil and Sinhalese communities. When it came to negotiations, failure begot further failure. Failed negotiations between the Sri Lankan

⁷⁹⁴ Neil Devotta, “From Ethnic Outbidding to Ethnic Conflict: The Institutional Bases for Sri Lanka’s Separatist War,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 11 (1), p.154. For more on ethnic conflict, see Barry Posen, “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict,” *Survival*, vol.35, no.1 (Spring 1993), pp.27-47; Stephen Van Evera, “Hypotheses on Nationalism and War,” *International Security*, vol.18, no.4 (Spring 1994), pp.5-39; Jack Snyder, “Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State,” *Survival*, vol.35, no.1 (Spring 1993), pp. 5-26; and Snyder, “The New Nationalism: Realist Interpretations and Beyond,” in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, eds., *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp.179-200.

government and Tamil representatives, both leading up to and during the insurgency, produced a climate of mutual distrust and suspicion. In all, negotiations failed in 1957, 1965, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1995, and finally during the Norwegian-sponsored peace talks of 2002-2008. These repeated unsuccessful negotiations “acted as a negative force on the settlement of the conflict by pushing the parties to abandon negotiations out of disinterest or exhaustion.”⁷⁹⁵

Table 6: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Analytic Framework Summary Analysis

Operational Tools

⁷⁹⁵ Sonia Bouffard and David Carment, “The Sri Lanka Peace Process: A Critical Review,” *Journal of South Asian Development*, 1:2 (2006), p.166.

Weapons	The LTTE weapons procurement network ensured that the group would never be left defenseless. As a whole, LTTE operational tools proved to be a strong deterrent to any form of negotiation, since the insurgents' arsenal meant that it was always prepared to fight.
Sanctuary	Sanctuary allowed the group to establish a system of governance to rival that of the Sri Lankan state. It also prolonged the duration of the conflict because it allowed insurgents to evade arrest and offered the Tigers a secure area to rest, recuperate, replenish, and rearm.
Funding	The Tamil diaspora and the LTTE's fundraising network kept the insurgents flush with cash for the majority of the conflict. However, following the 9/11 attacks, the international community cracked down on LTTE fundraising, which <i>should have</i> exerted pressure to negotiate an end to the conflict, but Prabhakaran refused.
<i>Organizational Tools</i>	
Command & Control	Unlike the PIRA/Sinn Fein relationship, the LTTE's political wing remained subordinate to the group's military wing throughout the duration of the insurgency. The LTTE was a rigidly hierarchical group with a leadership that left little room for dissent.
Group Composition	Some scholars argue that Prabhakaran was too much of an ideologue to ever seriously consider a negotiated settlement with the Sri Lankan government. Instead, he and his group reaped the benefits of several cease-fires to reorganize for the next offensive.
Ideology	LTTE ideology, although at times influenced by aspects of Marxism, could most aptly be characterized as ethno-nationalist. When the government ramped up its nationalist rhetoric, the Tamils responded by engaging in a campaign of ethnic outbidding, escalating sectarian violence and lessening the possibility of negotiations.
Popular Support	Following the 2004 tsunami, the LTTE's support among its constituency plummeted. LTTE extortion, recruitment of child soldiers, and an inability to manage development funds following the tsunami made the insurgents vulnerable. The government exploited this weakness and therefore eschewed negotiations.
Propaganda	The LTTE's propaganda machine operated at the behest of its leadership and unrelentingly pushed for the Tigers' goal of an independent Tamil Eelam. Overall, it is assessed that propaganda had relatively little impact on the decision to negotiate or continue fighting.
<i>Strategic Decision Making</i>	
Goals	The LTTE never wavered on the goal of establishing an independent Tamil Eelam. For the insurgents, acquiring an independent homeland was a zero-sum game and negotiations only served to further this goal.
Seminal Events	The Karuna faction split proved a devastating blow to any chances of negotiation during Eelam War IV. By the time the LTTE recognized the possible need to negotiate, the COIN forces surrounded a beleaguered insurgent force and employed unrelenting firepower to kill Prabhakaran and decimate the organization.
Previous attempts at conflict resolution	By the time Mahinda Rajapaksa came to power in Sri Lanka in 2005, the LTTE had broken numerous cease-fires and reneged on multiple peace negotiations. Prabhakaran overplayed his hand, and at the time of the final phase of the conflict, Sri Lanka's leader determined that only force could end the insurgency.
Mutually hurting stalemate	Despite the casualties incurred by both sides in the conflict, a true mutually hurting stalemate was never fully achieved. Because Prabhakaran utilized negotiations to recuperate and rearm, the COIN force was never able to escalate the conflict to a decisive point until 2009, at which negotiation was not an option.
Decision-making structure & process	Following the death of Balasingham, the organization lost its counterbalance to Prabhakaran's authoritarian nature. With no senior figures able to contest his decisions or provide an alternative point of view, Prabhakaran's intransigence came to define the group's relations with successive Sri Lankan leaders.

5.0 AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC)

5.1 BRIEF HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The African National Congress (ANC) has ruled South Africa's government since the mid-1990s. However, for the better part of three decades, the ANC was an outlawed insurgent organization that waged a campaign of terror against the government in Pretoria. Universally known for the iconic figure Nelson Mandela, the ANC actually traces its roots back to 1912 when it was founded as the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). The ANC was initially formed to advocate the rights of Black South Africans, who were dominated, politically and economically, by the minority Afrikaner population and the ruling government, the National Party (NP). Over the next several decades, the NP passed a series of laws that restricted the rights of Blacks in South Africa based on a system of racial segregation that came to be called *apartheid*.

Beginning in the 1950s, the ANC organized the Defiance Campaign, which was a mass movement that called for general strikes, defiance of the authorities, and an overall resistance to apartheid. In 1955, the ANC and its allies in the South African Communist Party (SACP), South African Indian Congress, South African Congress of Democrats (COD), and Coloured People's

Congress formed the South African Congress Alliance.⁷⁹⁶ The Alliance subsequently adopted the Freedom Charter, which laid out the core principles of a “non-racial” South Africa governed by the people.

In 1960, both the ANC and a radical black militant splinter group from the ANC, known as the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), were outlawed in South Africa under the Unlawful Organizations Act. Up until the early 1960s the Black Nationalist political parties in South Africa adhered to a non-violent ideology based on the tenets of Gandhi and non-violent confrontation. Pass burning campaigns and peaceful, though persistent, protest had characterized the anti-apartheid movement up until this point.⁷⁹⁷ However, after the ANC and the PAC were branded as illegal organizations, Mandela orchestrated the formation of ANC’s military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, also known as ‘Spear of the Nation,’ or MK.⁷⁹⁸ On December 16, 1961, MK detonated a series of explosions throughout the country, effectively marking the beginning of an insurgent campaign that would span three decades and result in the upheaval of a political system that had been in place since the beginning of the century.

⁷⁹⁶ The SACP had been illegal since the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act, although it later emerged underground three years later.

⁷⁹⁷ Pass burning was a reaction to the pass laws enacted during the nineteenth century. According to the pass laws, Black Africans were not allowed on the streets and towns in certain areas like Cape Province or Natal and had to carry a pass at all times. The laws were intended to severely restrict their movement into a within White and Coloured areas.

⁷⁹⁸ The literature refers to the ANC and the MK interchangeably in many cases. Part of this is due to the difficulty inherent in analyzing clandestine organizations. However, another reason is that unlike with the PIRA and Sinn Fein, ANC/MK activities in South Africa were much more difficult to distinguish from one another. Still, any errors remain solely the responsibility of this author.

5.1.1 Operating Logic

The ANC's operating logic was heavily influenced by classic insurgent doctrine, drawn from the teachings of Mao, Che, and Giap. The insurgents' strategy was tailored to Mao's three phases and rested upon four fundamental pillars: mobilization and organization of the masses; building a robust underground network and intelligence capability; a sustained armed offensive; and the isolation of the apartheid government in the international community.⁷⁹⁹ Top ANC leaders, including Joe Slovo, the chief architect of its guerilla strategy, passionately argued against other popular insurgent theories like Regis Debray's *focoist* approach. For Slovo and much of the ANC leadership, the *focoist* approach placed too great an emphasis on the military over the political. To be sure, a sound military component would be critical to success, but elevating it in importance over the political aspect of the conflict was widely viewed as a mistake.⁸⁰⁰

From a practical standpoint, the nascent insurgent group was outmanned and outgunned. The South African Defense Forces (SADF) was the most potent force on the continent; its elite units ranked among the best in the world. This was an incentive for the ANC to focus significant resources on the political front. The group's documents are unequivocal about this, declaring that "the victory we strive for has at its aim the seizure of power by the people led by their political vanguard, the ANC."⁸⁰¹ According to both Mao and Giap, the first phase of insurgency was a slow and arduous process that involved mobilizing support at the grassroots, or local level.

⁷⁹⁹ Kevin A. O'Brien, "A Blunted Spear: The Failure of the African National Congress/South African Communist Party Revolutionary War Strategy, 1961-1990," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.14, No.2, June 2003, p.31.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ ANC Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=2639>, site accessed April 11, 2012.

Phase I revolutionary warfare should limit the use of violence, where possible, lest the proto-insurgency risk being crushed in its embryonic stages. The ANC recognized this, and in accordance with classic Maoist doctrine, the years 1961-1965 were characterized by acts of sabotage and the avoidance of head on clashes with the South African security forces, including the South African Police (SAP).

The political was supreme over the military from the beginning. To swim like fish in the sea, as Mao urged, the ANC needed to galvanize widespread popular support in the cities and the townships. To accomplish this, its political message had to be both clear and convincing. But there were still voices within the organization that favored Guevara's *focoist* approach. These individuals argued that *focoism* had been successful for Castro in Cuba, where the insurgents eschewed lengthy political preparation at the local level. But Cuba was an anomaly. The record for *focoism*, historically, is mixed at best and disastrous at worst.⁸⁰² Guevara's bastardization of Maoism, while open to criticism, did contribute the idea that *the people* were the 'vanguard of the army,' a tenet which became central to ANC recruiting strategy.

5.1.2 Type of Insurgency

What began as a local insurgency expanded to become a "Global-Local"-type insurgency. A "Global-Local" insurgency receives outside support (as the ANC did from numerous states, including the USSR and East Germany) and also becomes part of a wider regional struggle. In the 1980s, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal each regularly contributed

⁸⁰² Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy*, p.850. Also see Eldon Kenworthy, "Latin American Revolutionary Theory: Is it Back to the Paris Commune?" *Journal of International Affairs*, 25, 1971, pp.164-170

\$1 million per year to the ANC.⁸⁰³ As detailed in greater depth in subsequent sections of this chapter, the ANC's most effective fighting units were based primarily outside South Africa, in countries throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Inevitably, ANC insurgents came into contact with revolutionaries in each of these countries. At one point, the insurgents established an ANC-ZAPU-FRELIMO-MPLA-SWAPO alliance with guerillas fighting host-nation governments in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia, respectively.⁸⁰⁴ MK guerillas could be considered the predecessors to the roving bands of *mujahedin* fighters that traveled the globe from the Balkans to the Caucasus to Afghanistan and Pakistan in search of a fight. The conditions that spawned the insurgency were local, but the fighters that the conflict produced were unconstrained by national borders.

5.1.3 Approach

One of the ANC's guiding documents, 'Strategy and Tactics of the African National Congress,' laid out the blueprint for the approach that the insurgency would follow over the next two decades. While the primary theatre of operations was supposed to be located in the countryside, the lack of a rural black peasantry in South Africa led the ANC's leaders to focus on urban areas, including major townships and cities. These areas would serve as the focal point of what came to be called 'Revolutionary Onslaught,' a phrase that translated to a wide range of activities

⁸⁰³ Pearl-Alice Marsh and Thomas S. Szayna, "The South African Retrospective Case," in Thomas S. Szayna ed., *Identifying Potential Ethnic Conflict: Application of a Process Model*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 2000, p.163.

⁸⁰⁴ While the USSR supported the ANC-ZAPU-FELIMO-MPLA-SWAPO alliance, the Chinese Communists supported the Pan African Congress and its armed wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). O'Brien, "Blunted Spear," p.42.

including political struggle, trade union activity, mass women's campaigns, school boycotts, participation of religious organizations, and peasant revolts.⁸⁰⁵

To complement these activities, the 'Revolutionary Onslaught' followed a three-pronged military effort. First, insurgents operating in rural areas connected with villagers and farm workers. Next, underground urban combat groups that worked in factories during the day conducted operations under the cover of darkness at night. Finally, militias operated as self-defense units that were then coopted and led by more experienced, well-trained MK fighters.⁸⁰⁶

At the 1985 Kabwe Conference in Zambia, several influential ANC leaders complained about the urban focus of the insurgency. They insisted that the dearth of operations in the countryside had provided the South African security services free reign to operate with relative impunity. Indeed, in many of the rural areas, the government established SADF tribal battalions, created homeland administrations, and coerced tribal elders to cooperate.⁸⁰⁷ The tension between finding the right balance between urban and rural operations would frustrated the ANC/MK leadership throughout the insurgency.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid, p.39.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷ Williams, "The Other Armies."

5.2 OPERATIONAL TOOLS

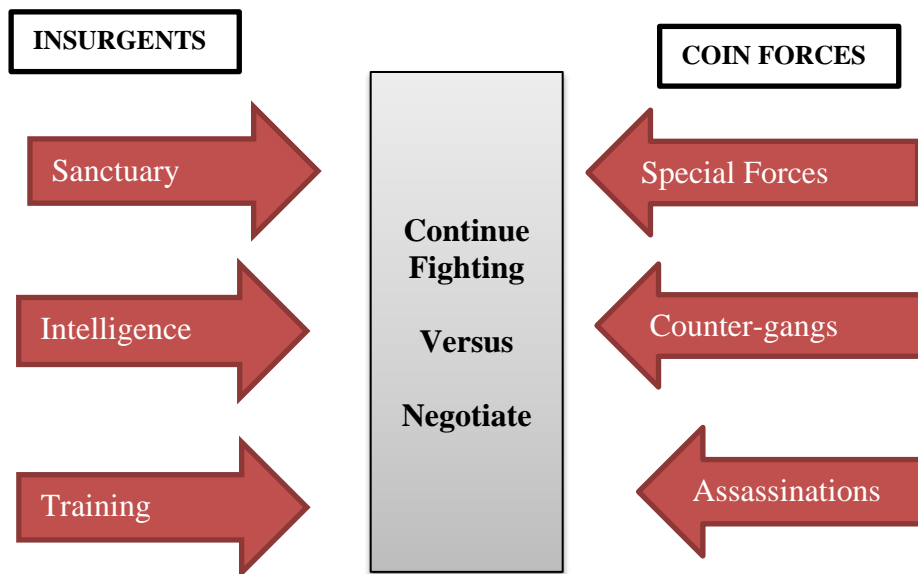


Figure 13: ANC Force Field

5.2.1 Sanctuary

Throughout most of the three and half decades of the insurgency, South Africa remained inhospitable territory for ANC guerillas. Between 1961 and 1962, Mandela sought safe haven in both Algeria and Ethiopia.⁸⁰⁸ For the rest of the ANC's terrorist campaign, its fighters utilized external sanctuary to network with other insurgent groups, develop a military infrastructure designed to be transplanted back into South Africa, lobby for political support, and plan operations in South African townships and cities. In the early 1960s, the territories immediately bordering South Africa—Southern Rhodesia (present-day Zimbabwe), Bechuanaland (present-day Botswana), Basutoland (present-day Lesotho), Swaziland, and Mozambique—denied the

⁸⁰⁸ Rocky Williams, "The Other Armies: A Brief Historical Overview of Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK), 1961-1994," *Military History Journal*, Vol.11, No.5, June 2000.

ANC sanctuary, which forced the insurgents to seek refuge in far-flung corners of the continent, as well as in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.⁸⁰⁹ Other ANC-friendly regimes included those in Zambia, Tanzania, and Egypt.

5.2.1.1 Why was sanctuary such a valuable resource?

Networking

In its search for sanctuary abroad, the ANC came into contact with myriad other insurgent groups. One of these groups was the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and its armed wing, the Zimbabwean Independent People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), a group the ANC launched a joint operation with during the 'Wankie' Campaign of 1967-1968. In 1980, South African COIN forces disrupted a plan to integrate MK fighters into the newly formed Zimbabwe Defence Force. The insurgents traded tactics and best practices, reflected in an MK Special Operations attack on the Sasol oil refinery complex. The South African intelligence services believed that the Sasol attack was modeled closely on a similar attack against an oil refinery in Salisbury carried out by ZIPRA insurgents.⁸¹⁰

Besides sharing similar military objectives, the ANC and ZAPU followed similar ideologies, had close ethnic links (the Ndebele and Zulu-speaking South Africans and their Matabele cousins in Matabeleland), and both political parties maintained bases in urban

⁸⁰⁹ The ANC and the Soviet Union had a relationship dating back to the 1920s, when former ANC president Josiah Gumede traveled to the USSR in November 1927 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. For a detailed history of this relationship, see Vladimir Shubin, *Hot "Cold War": the USSR in Southern Africa*, London: Pluto Books, 2008.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid.

redoubts.⁸¹¹ In the mid-1970s, following insurgent victories in Angola and Mozambique, the ANC continued cooperating with the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO). Indeed, MK insurgents had fought alongside FRELIMO guerillas in the mid-1970s, and even participated in the liberation of Tete Province in Mozambique. In what came to be called the "Northern Front," the MK allied with the MPLA against UNITA rebels in Angola in 1987. Fighting on the "Northern Front" demonstrated just how skilled MK insurgents had become. For over two years, in addition to conducting patrols and convoys on UNITA strongholds, the MK attacked UNITA fighters with anti-aircraft artillery (ZGUs), 122 mm rocket launchers, and 81 mm and 60 mm mortars.⁸¹²

By operating alongside groups like FRELIMO and the MPLA, the ANC was able to learn by doing. This experience would prove to be the insurgents' main body of tacit knowledge, which it would then transfer back to ANC cadres operating within the townships of South Africa. For the most part, though, tacit knowledge transfer was a less important factor for the ANC than it was for the other three groups analyzed in this dissertation. The primary reason for this is because most ANC/MK involved rudimentary methods, such as sabotage, ambushes, and small arms fire.

Military Infrastructure

For the majority of the conflict, the ANC was vexed by an inability to establish a sound military infrastructure within the borders of South Africa. Without such an infrastructure, it would be impossible to achieve Mao's third phase of warfare, which is focused on launching an orthodox military campaign against the state, with the destruction of the ruling regime as the ultimate aim.

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

⁸¹² Ibid.

In lieu of favorable conditions for an internal military infrastructure, the ANC developed bases in Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Swaziland. By the mid-1970s, major MK bases were set up in Maputo, Mozambique, as well as Gaborone, Botswana. Toward the end of the decade, similar camps had been established in multiple areas of Angola, including Luanda, Fundo, Nova Katenga, Viana, Quixae, Pango, and Quatro.⁸¹³ The MK base in the Angolan capital of Luanda proved extremely valuable, as it put the ANC in contact with fighters from the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) who had established their own base of operations there around the same time.

Political Support

Besides sending ANC members abroad to enhance the group's military capabilities, insurgents sought sanctuary in other countries to lobby for political support. Political work often took the form of political education, diplomacy, coordination, and organization. Not only did the ANC try to garner support for its own purposes, but it also worked tirelessly to generate a steady level of opprobrium against the apartheid system among a variety of interest groups, both in South Africa and among the wider international community. Diplomacy was at the heart of much of the ANC's political activities. The diplomatic component of the organization was placed in charge of securing financial and other forms of assistance from foreign allies, thereby diversifying the group's sources of support. To accomplish this mission, the ANC created Internal Political Reconstruction Committees (IPRCs).

In Botswana, members of the local IPRC spread the ANC's message and talked to locals about the situation in South Africa. Over time, IPRC functionaries encouraged Botswanans to

⁸¹³ O'Brien, "Blunted Spear," p.42.

create local political organizations.⁸¹⁴ In Lesotho, the ANC cultivated a “train- the- trainers” program with a political flavor. Courses on South African politics, trade unionism, and underground political organization were offered; eventually, the Lesotho “machinery” matured to the point where it became self-sufficient in the politics and propaganda of the ANC. While many officials in the South African government viewed the ANC not as a liberation movement but rather a terrorist movement, Swaziland’s ruler, King Sobhuza II, was an ardent ANC supporter. In 1975, the ANC persuaded the Swaziland government to accept Thabo Mbeki and Albertina Sisulu as representatives to a United Nations conference held in the country.⁸¹⁵ In neighboring Mozambique, Jacob Zuma was tasked with inculcating new recruits regarding the importance of a political education.

5.2.1.2 How did it change over time?

The availability of safe haven was constantly in flux. In the early years of the conflict, the countries bordering South Africa were either ruled by settler regimes sympathetic to the apartheid government in Pretoria or economically dependent on the government. In either case, challenges to the status quo were rare. Unbeknownst to the ANC at the time, an event that took place over 10,000 miles away would have a momentous impact on the group’s use of external sanctuaries. In 1974, the Carnation Revolution swept through Portugal. Though the military coup ended without any shots fired, it would have major ramifications for liberation movements across Sub-Saharan Africa.

⁸¹⁴ Gregory Houston and Bernard Magubane, “The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s,” in *The Road to Democracy in South Africa: Volume II, 1970-1980*, South African Democracy Education Trust (SADET), Unisa: University of South Africa Press, 2006, p.417.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid, p.426.

Following the collapse of the Salazar-Caetano government, Portugal moved to shed its vast colonial holdings in Africa. Angola and Mozambique, both former Portuguese colonies, gained independence between 1974 and 1975. What followed in those two countries were protracted insurgencies that played out over the course of the next three decades. According to Williams, “the independence of Mozambique and Angola provided MK with access to either training facilities or conduit opportunities through these countries that were considerably closer to home than before.”⁸¹⁶ The ANC retained its sanctuary in Angola for many years to come, but its safe haven in Mozambique ended in 1984 when the government of South Africa and the government in Maputo signed the Nkomati Accord. This agreement was essentially a non-aggression pact between the two countries with a quid pro quo at its core—the South African government would no longer support Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) insurgents if the Mozambican authorities denied the use of its territory as a sanctuary to the ANC. A less significant change occurred toward the end of the conflict when the ANC began operating freely in the Transkei Bantustan, an area essentially governed by a de facto alliance between the Holomisa Administration and the ANC/MK.⁸¹⁷

5.2.2 Intelligence

For a guerilla army without a steady supply of weapons, an effective intelligence service is critical. During the first five years of the insurgency, the ANC leadership insisted on limiting its operations against the South African state to acts of sabotage. In order to successfully execute

⁸¹⁶ Williams, “The Other Armies.”

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

attacks against pass offices, power stations, and government buildings, the ANC needed to construct a clandestine intelligence network that was expansive in both its breadth and its depth. Complicating matters was the strength of South Africa's Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), a well-equipped and steadily-resourced branch that sent its officers abroad for advanced training in countries including France, Germany, the United States, and Great Britain.⁸¹⁸ A civilian counterpart to the Directorate of Military Intelligence, known as Republican Intelligence, was created in 1961 with the rather broad mission to contain and eliminate MK activities within South Africa.

5.2.2.1 Why was intelligence such a valuable resource?

Development of the Underground Network

The development of an underground network was a paramount goal of the ANC during its formative years. Operation Mayibuye, or Operation Comeback, was a plan designed to bring insurgents back into South Africa from the surrounding territories with the explicit purpose of building a clandestine intelligence network that could play a leading role in battling the South African security services. The decision to build this network was born of necessity. With the passing of the Unlawful Organizations Act of 1960, the ANC was officially outlawed in South Africa—membership in the organization was therefore illegal and punishable by imprisonment. In 1963, the South African government passed the General Law Amendment (also known as the Sabotage Act), which allowed a South African police officer to detain, without warrant, a person

⁸¹⁸ According to Williams, members of the Directorate of Military Intelligence received 'on the job training,' or what has been referred to as *metis* (knowledge gained through experience) through participation in foreign COIN campaigns. South African General Magnus Malan was deployed to Algeria with the specific mandate to hone his interrogation techniques and conduct counter-intelligence operations with the French Army. These lessons were then passed on to Republican Intelligence. Ibid.

suspected of a politically motivated crime for up to 90 days without access to a lawyer. This draconian measure was similar to the policy of internment without trial in Northern Ireland.

Another major impetus that contributed to the sense of urgency the ANC felt in developing an underground intelligence network was the “Rivonia Raid” on Lilliesleaf Farm in 1964. During this raid, South African COIN forces decimated the insurgency’s command structure by capturing the top leadership of both ANC and SACP. Most of the senior figures in both groups were apprehended, interrogated, and subsequently imprisoned on Robben Island. The ANC learned a valuable lesson from the “Rivonia Raid” and would launch Operation ‘Vula’ in the 1980s to further the development of intelligence cells, arms caches, networks of informers and other clandestine structures.⁸¹⁹

Since the ANC never enjoyed the luxury of a surplus of weaponry, it was important for the insurgents to hide and preserve the weapons they did have. The group primarily maintained an arsenal of light weapons and explosives, including Makarov pistols, AK-47s, TNT, and hand grenades. In order to stash these weapons in advance of an operation, they would be placed in trunks and buried in the ground. For preservation, MK fighters used caustic soda mixed with ash to retard the corrosion process and prevent rust.⁸²⁰ In different parts of the country, the South African Students’ Movement (SASM) formed ‘shadow committees’ to further the reach of the ANC underground. A major preoccupation for these committees was how to establish cells without exposing other cells operating throughout South Africa.

The main internal underground organ of the ANC, however, was *Sechaba-Isizwe*, which

⁸¹⁹ An in-depth analysis of Operation Vula can be found in Robert D’A. Henderson, “Operation Vula Against Apartheid,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol.10, No.4, 1997, pp.418-455.

⁸²⁰ Houston and Magubane, “The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s,” p.397.

had a three-pronged strategy for conducting clandestine political work: consolidating mass legal organizations and preparing them to undertake an active mass struggle in the country; galvanizing underground units that would engage in armed activities against the South African state; and lastly, coordinating mass levels of struggle against all types of apartheid while simultaneously making the struggle visible to those outside of the country.⁸²¹

Surveillance & Reconnaissance

In the first two years of its existence, MK conducted over 200 acts of sabotage against the state. To sustain such an op tempo, an insurgency needs a fairly widespread intelligence network on the ground in order to coordinate attacks. Such a network includes lookouts, facilitators, those willing to hide and store explosives (sometimes for extended periods of time) and others who would risk imprisonment by harboring insurgents, etc.

MK units gained combat experience in reconnaissance missions in Southern Rhodesia, where the “Luthuli Detachment” operated alongside ZIPRA insurgents.⁸²² Without surveillance and reconnaissance, fighters are unable to infiltrate an area without being detected by the security forces. Most importantly, the insurgents needed to know the quickest and safest ways into and out of the country. Depending on the presence of the COIN force in specific locales, some areas of the country proved far more challenging than others for the insurgents to grow and sustain an effective intelligence capability. For example, the South African capital of Pretoria was the ‘citadel of power for apartheid,’ and remained so for the duration of the conflict.

⁸²¹ The Road to Democracy in South Africa, Volume 2, pp.411-412.

⁸²² Williams, “The Other Armies.”

Infiltration

Infiltration took place on two levels. First, since the insurgents operated in exile, outside the borders of South Africa, they needed to infiltrate the country in order to conduct attacks. Second, and this is a classic insurgent tactic, the ANC used infiltration as a form of subversion in its efforts to penetrate the South African security services. To ease the burden of infiltrating the country, the ANC established an intelligence network both inside and outside the country. The intelligence component of the organization was responsible for smuggling fighters into and out of the country. Only in the mid to late 1980s was an open pathway established that allowed for a steady stream of fighters to traverse the border. The result was a sustained bombing campaign by the MK that included launching “spectaculars,” or high-profile attacks against government buildings and infrastructure.

The critical nodes in the intelligence network were known as political-military committees, or PMCs. Area PMCs (APMCs) were set up in every part of South Africa and worked closely with the Regional PMCs (RPMCs) outside of the country to assist MK fighters infiltrating South Africa from an external sanctuary. The PMCs were aided by a communication system that used computers linked between South Africa and London.⁸²³ Once inside the country, the APMCs could help the insurgents navigate the local urban terrain. During Operation Vula, leading insurgent figures, including Mac Maharaj and Sphiwe Nuanda, were smuggled back into the country.⁸²⁴ Operation Vula also helped put in place an arms smuggling network which provided the insurgents with consistent access to large quantities of weapons.

As mentioned above, the ANC’s intelligence network relied on infiltration as a form of

⁸²³ Williams, “The Other Armies.”

⁸²⁴ O’Brien, “Blunted Spear,” p.58.

subversion. This strategy entailed the penetration of both the Special Branch and the National Intelligence Service. The development of “moles” inside the South African security forces allowed the MK to access National Intelligence Service files and other intelligence-related reports.⁸²⁵ MKIZA infiltrated the SADF itself which then provided the MK with the capability to conduct analyses of the SAF’s order of battle, operations in planning, and the general mood of the leadership (e.g. pro-negotiations, anti-negotiations).

Harmonization of Military and Political Wings

With the advent of the insurgency in 1960, the ANC faced two major challenges. First, the leadership was unfamiliar with the intricacies of underground work. This led to continuous tension between the political and military wings of the organization. This tension became more pronounced as a separate cleavage deepened between the old guard and the younger generation.⁸²⁶ Secondly, because the ANC existed largely in exile, there was a need to publicize the group’s actions and statements. This meant that the public recognition of its leaders was a necessary evil. Once these individuals were identified publicly, it was much easier for the COIN force to track and monitor them. The harmonization of the political and military branches of the ANC was a key issue at the 1969 Morogoro Conference. One byproduct was the establishment of the Revolutionary Council, tasked with the difficult job of streamlining activities of those two elements. Some progress was made, but these dual tensions dogged the ANC throughout the conflict.

By the mid-1970s, the ANC still struggled to mobilize enough resources and recruits to

⁸²⁵ Henderson, “Operation Vula,” p.419.

⁸²⁶ This point is underscored with a lengthy analysis in the section on group composition later in the chapter.

launch a full-scale ‘people’s war.’ In an attempt to revive these efforts, the leadership created a Department of Intelligence and Security (DIS), which included the following sub-departments: Counterintelligence, Security (*Mbokodo*), VIP Protection, and Central Intelligence Evaluation.⁸²⁷ The MK Intelligence Division (MZIKA) was the Special Forces intelligence wing of the insurgency and the ANC Civilian Intelligence (NAT) coordinated civilian intelligence, counter-intelligence and security. A considerable challenge for these organizations was dealing with perpetual infighting and thinly veiled jealousy. The MK consistently adopted a more militaristic line than the ANC, which often aroused suspicion and doubt about the true intentions of the respective units.⁸²⁸

5.2.2.2 How did it change over time?

As the ANC intelligence infrastructure grew more sophisticated in the mid-1970s, then-Defense Minister P.W. Botha put forth a 1975 *White Paper on Defence*, which laid out the South African State Security Council’s (SSC) ‘Total National Strategy.’⁸²⁹ In essence, this strategy drew from the works of well-known COIN theorists Sir Robert Thompson, John McCuen, and General Andre Beaufre, and laid out an integrated approach to fighting the ANC and MK.⁸³⁰ With a formidable ANC intelligence network now operating both inside and outside of the country, the SADF realized that it too needed to operate outside South Africa if it was going to have the chance to disrupt the network. What this meant was an increased role for South African special

⁸²⁷ O’Brien, “Blunted Spear,” p.50.

⁸²⁸ Williams, “The Other Armies.”

⁸²⁹ After 1985-1986, the ‘Total National Strategy’ gave way to the ‘Total Counter-Revolutionary Strategy.’

⁸³⁰ Kevin O’Brien, “Special Forces for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.12, No.2, Summer 2001, p.83.

operations units to counter the ANC. In 1982, over 100 COIN force commandos launched an operation in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho. Thirty ANC insurgents were killed in the raid.⁸³¹ Between 1981 and 1984, over 12 raids were executed against the ANC intelligence presence in Mozambique.

So even as the ANC's intelligence network expanded and increased its operational capacity, the COIN force countered by relying more on its most elite units. By the late 1980s, a significant number of insurgents had been smuggled back into South Africa. But just as the underground intelligence infrastructure began to take root, geopolitical events overtook this development. As the Cold War came to a close, intelligence training from the East Germans also ceased. An interesting development that few saw coming occurred as the insurgents and counterinsurgents started to explore the possibility of a negotiated peace. The intelligence apparatuses of each side played an indispensable role in the negotiation process. The Department of Constitutional Planning and the National Intelligence Service worked in tandem with the ANC's Department of Intelligence and Security to make the transition from war to peace a smooth one. According to O'Brien, "the civilian spies would see in the new era."⁸³²

5.2.3 Training

As noted in the sections on sanctuary and intelligence, ANC fighters were trained abroad and then infiltrated back into the country to conduct attacks. The first ANC training camps were

⁸³¹ Ibid, p.98.

⁸³² O'Brien, "Blunted Spear," p.60.

located in Zambia, and several countries in North Africa, including Algeria and Egypt.⁸³³ In the early-mid 1970s, the ANC offered military instruction to insurgents at bases in Tanzania.⁸³⁴ By 1977, five major training camps were located in Angola—two in Luanda, and the other three in parts of the north and northeast of the country. MK fighters typically spent two years in Angola, while elite soldiers were sent to the USSR and East Germany for advanced training.⁸³⁵ Although the conditions in many of the camps were spartan, the training itself was hardly rudimentary. There was different training for rural and urban warfare, with tactics specialized and tailored to the environment. Moreover, as the camps grew in size, they needed to be staffed and defended. As such, many bases included an entire infrastructure complete with security, educational instruction, and food allotments through maintenance of a farm. So even while the ANC was considered organizationally challenged, it was also “bureaucratically complicated.”⁸³⁶

5.2.3.1 Why was training such a valuable resource?

Lethality and Optempo

Initially, since MK fighters lacked skills and comprehensive training, most of the group’s attacks in the early stages of the conflict were amateurish and sloppily executed.⁸³⁷ But once the leadership made the decision to abandon sabotage operations in favor of more lethal attacks,

⁸³³ The ANC also benefited from fighters who switched into the group from the PAC, which trained in Libya.

⁸³⁴ Tom Lodge, “State of Exile: The African National Congress of South Africa, 1976-1986,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.9, No.1, January 1987, p.6.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Lodge, “State of Exile,” pp.7-10.

⁸³⁷ Williams, “The Other Armies.”

including those targeting civilians, the insurgents received training in a range of military tactics and weapons, such as automatic rifles, RPG-7 rocket launchers, hand-grenades, and other light weaponry. This instruction was provided by Cubans and according to South African police sources interviewed at the time, the “quality” was deemed to be “excellent.” Explosives training, ordnance detonation, and logistical support focused on the use of land mines, which were introduced to the battlefield in South Africa as early as 1977. MK fighters placed landmines on the roads in the border areas frequently traveled by farmers known to be active within the SADF commando system.⁸³⁸ In addition, the insurgents were trained with the intent to train others. Fighters were given several hundred grams of TNT, detonators (regular/standard or electric depending on what was available) and a length of safety fuse.⁸³⁹

MK attacks increased exponentially in the late 1970s into the early and mid-1980s. Much of this was due in large measure to the establishment of MK’s Special Operations Division. This division was created because the insurgency recognized the urgency of conducting attacks deep within South African territory. Only by striking at the heart of the apartheid regime could the ANC galvanize the black population to throw the full weight of its support behind the insurgents, thus transforming the conflict.

A more nefarious motive for the creation of the Special Operations Division, however, was the desire by elements within the MK to plan and conduct operations without consulting the ANC hierarchy. By circumventing the chain of command, or being less than forthcoming on the specific details of an attack, MK fighters felt that they could operate with more autonomy and flexibility. Oliver Tambo, who maintained control over Special Operations, argued that for

⁸³⁸ Ibid.

⁸³⁹ Houston and Magubane, “The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s,” p.404.

reasons of operational security, the details of a planned attack would only be available on a need to know basis. While the secrecy surrounding MK Special Operations units caused consternation among both MK rank-and-file fighters and ANC officials, there was no doubt that the newly formed units attacks were successful, as demonstrated in both the 1980 Sasol oil refinery complex attack and another attack two years later against the Koeberg nuclear power plant near Cape Town.

Military Prowess and Overall Professionalization

Another reason why training was so critical to the ANC was to increase the organization's military prowess and professionalization so it could face the well-trained and highly motivated South African COIN forces. Accordingly, the insurgents training went beyond strictly kinetic activities and included map reading, South African history and politics, physical endurance and exercise. Moreover, the guerillas received training in the basic principles of logistical support to combat units, operational security and clandestine communications, as well as other professional military drilling such as musketry, typography, and engineering.

Even though South Africa remained primarily a guerilla environment, elite insurgents were trained in Ukraine and other Soviet Cold War satellites to use sophisticated weaponry, including Grad P rocket launchers, anti-tank weapons, mortars, and heavy machine guns.⁸⁴⁰ This points to the degree of planning and organization involved in the ANC's strategy. Although the use of these weapons never actually took place in battle, knowledge and training related to their use was consistent with the group's goal of escalating the conflict to the level of Phase III warfare.

⁸⁴⁰ Lodge, "State of Exile," p.7.

Ideological Support

The ANC was imbued with a heavy dose of Soviet influence, which extended to Soviet-inspired military practices (drill, instructor and officer training, weapons techniques, etc.) and classic guerilla army traditions (minimal rank structure, emphasis on self-sufficiency, innovation and mission-orientation focus).⁸⁴¹ There was a political education component of training that helped to furnish the development of a ‘corporate identity’ while also stressing the importance of the commissary system. Banned books on the various aspects of Marxism and Communism were smuggled from abroad and into South Africa. Leninism was taught in many of the camps and served as a unifying theory. And although the assistance of a superpower like the Soviet Union went a long way toward organizing the insurgency, things did not always work according to plan. In 1984, a breakdown in communication between the training camps and the political leadership in Lusaka led to mutinies at bases in Angola. This reinforced the division of the kinetic and non-kinetic components of the ANC, which were separated both physically and metaphorically.

Recruitment

The strategy envisioned by the ANC was to train its fighters to the standard where they could train other fighters, thus multiplying the ranks of the organization and broadening its appeal. According to this plan, each guerilla unit would recruit and train four insurgents, who would subsequently train four more insurgents, thus growing the organization exponentially.⁸⁴² In 1975, the Revolutionary Council created a special sub-committee on recruitment and training.

⁸⁴¹ Williams, “The Other Armies.”

⁸⁴² O’Brien, “Blunted Spear,” p.62.

Universities remained a favorite ANC recruiting spot, but with prison serving as a veritable revolving door for ANC members, South African jails became “breeding nests for ANC revolutionaries.”⁸⁴³

In keeping with its vision of a well-rounded organization bilingual in both politics and force, ANC training included instruction in the principles of the Freedom Charter. Similarly, recruiters looked for individuals who did not shy from taking action. This dynamic was evident with certain SSRC members, including a militant group of young members recruited into the ANC known as the ‘suicide squad.’ This unit was determined to eliminate COIN force elements like the special branch in the township. The ‘Suicide Squad’s main job was to gather explosives. They accomplished this by raiding mines and then using the explosives to carry out bomb attacks throughout Soweto. Once established, they would then train others to use explosives.

The Soweto Uprising of 1976 was a major turning point in the conflict. For the ANC, it led to an influx of recruits who demanded training so they could protect their neighborhoods. Many were young, university-educated students who were upset over a general sense of lawlessness, crime, and gangsterism that swept throughout the townships. In response, Black South Africans began to organize, much in the same way that the Catholic community in Northern Ireland mobilized throughout the “no-go” areas before these were broken up following Operation Motorman.

5.2.3.2 How did it change over time?

In 1965, MK counted an estimated 800 insurgents trained and on bases throughout Southern Africa. By 1976, this number grew to 1,000. In 1980, it had reached 9,000 and by 1990 it stood

⁸⁴³ Houston and Magubane, “The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s,” pp.374-375.

at an estimated 11,000 trained insurgents (the MK claimed 16,000 but this figure is often disputed).⁸⁴⁴ On the whole, the ANC's ability to train dovetailed with the group's ability to locate and maintain safe havens. In its formative years, these bases were few and far between, scattered mostly through North Africa. In the 1970s and 1980s, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, training was provided by "virtually all the former socialist countries as well as in a range of African countries."⁸⁴⁵

When the government in Portugal fell, the ANC moved into Angola. These camps were initially based in southern Angola, but with the increasing frequency of SADF attacks, the camps and bases were moved up north, to Malanje, Quibaze, Pango, Caculama, Funda, and Fazenda.⁸⁴⁶ When the Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) gained control over large swaths of Mozambique, the ANC sent fighters for training in firearms, guerilla tactics, underground work, and explosives.⁸⁴⁷ In 1988, all ANC forces in Angola migrated east to camps in Tanzania and Uganda. The following years saw the disintegration of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc, and along with them, opportunities for elite ANC fighters to be trained abroad.

⁸⁴⁴ O'Brien, "Blunted Spear," p.62.

⁸⁴⁵ Williams, "The Other Armies."

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Houston and Magubane, "The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s," p.385.

5.3 ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

5.3.1 Command & Control

Following the Sharpeville massacre and the declaration of martial law, the ANC (along with the PAC) was outlawed under the Suppression of Communism Act.⁸⁴⁸ With the implementation of the M-Plan, the ANC organized its members into a cellular structure. Each township street consisted of one cell, which was then subdivided into blocks. Blocks were comprised of seven households. Seven cells made up a zone and four zones constituted a ward, which was itself led by a prime steward.⁸⁴⁹

For the first several years following the Rivonia raid, the ANC command and control network was in disarray. To remedy this, the group arranged the First Consultative Conference of the ANC in Morogoro, Tanzania from April-May 1969. One of the primary aims of the conference was to reestablish a functioning command and control structure. To achieve this, the ANC created a 'Revolutionary Council' to direct the insurgency. The council was headed by Tambo and consisted of both ANC and SACP representatives. The 30-member National Executive Committee (NEC) was elected by a general congress of the ANC's voting members,

⁸⁴⁸ Thomas Karis, Gwendolen M. Carter, and Gail M. Gerhart, eds., *From Protest to Challenge: A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1977, pp.339-340.

⁸⁴⁹ Kevin E. Grisham, "Guerillas Today, What Tomorrow: Transformation of Guerilla Movements," Ph.D. Dissertation submitted to the University of California-Riverside, 2009, p.283.

though the final call was left to the group's president. The executive body of the NEC was the National Working Committee (NWC)—elected by the NEC within its ranks—in between its congresses.⁸⁵⁰

The ANC external organizational structure was based in Lusaka during the early 1970s. A secretariat headed the organization, and was in charge of three sections: president's office, treasury department, and a division of external affairs. The division of external affairs administered the organization's vast diplomatic apparatus, which maintained a presence in twenty-two countries.⁸⁵¹ The MK was the largest structure within the exile organization and had its own structure. MK activities were controlled and directed by a National High Command, which in turn appointed Regional Commands. While the High Command was responsible for tactics and targets, as well as finance and training, the Regional Commands were in charge of directing the local sabotage groups operating within their respective areas.⁸⁵²

By the early 1980s, despite progress in several critical areas of the conflict, the ANC had failed to spread the insurgency throughout the population. A 'people's war' did not seem imminent, and so in 1982 the ANC tinkered with its organizational structure once again. In an attempt to revamp its local infrastructure, the insurgents created a Politico-Military Council to replace the Revolutionary Council.

In conjunction with the External Coordinating Council (ECC), the Politico-Military Council was now one of two coordinating bodies with the executive power to make decisions.⁸⁵³

⁸⁵⁰ Marsh and Szayna, "The South African Retrospective Case," p.161.

⁸⁵¹ Lodge, "State of Exile," p.5.

⁸⁵² Francis Meli, *A History of the ANC: South Africa Belongs to Us*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988, p.147.

⁸⁵³ Ibid.

Three offices, including the Office of the President, the Office of the Secretary General, and the Office of the Treasurer General oversaw all of the organization's departments. Responsibilities were divided among the following components⁸⁵⁴

Table 7: ANC Sections and Responsibilities

Section	Responsibilities
Political Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilize mass action - Establish underground units - Maintain contacts with legal organizations within the country - Create legal organizations for mass mobilization and mass action - Report to the PMC on the state of internal organization and political activities
Women's Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilize women inside and outside of South Africa - Organize international material and political support from women overseas - Issue internal and external propaganda - Report regularly to Secretary General
ANC Youth League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruit young students into ANC - Organize ANC youth abroad into active units - Issue internal and external propaganda
Military Headquarters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct military operations inside and outside South Africa⁸⁵⁵ - Establish underground MK cells inside the

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid, p.162.

⁸⁵⁵ These operations were subject to plans approved by the MPC/NWC/NEC.

	country <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report regularly to the NEC on the state of the army and the conduct of military operations
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The PMC was created in the image of the COIN force security services, complete with committees and sub-units developed to improve the coordination of the ANC and the MK. The PMC was first led by Joe Nhlanhla and allowed for a far more decentralized structure than the Revolutionary Council.⁸⁵⁶ The Military Headquarters split its responsibilities geographically, designating the area from Mozambique to Swaziland as the Eastern Front and the area from Zambia to Botswana as the Western Front.⁸⁵⁷ The PMC model was found to be effective and as a result, was replicated at the level of external Regional Political Military Councils (Swaziland, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and London), internal Regional PMCs (Western Cape, Border region, North Transvaal), Area PMCs (Durban, Pretoria), and local PMCs in the towns and villages.⁸⁵⁸

5.3.2 Group Composition

In his analysis of the African National Congress' leadership, Lodge differentiates between the old guard and the new generation. Each group is then broken down further for a total of four separate clusters within the ANC. The first group consisted of those whose experience dated back to the nationalist revival of the ANC Youth League in the 1940s. Tambo was

⁸⁵⁶ O'Brien, "Blunted Spear," p.50.

⁸⁵⁷ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades*, p.127.

⁸⁵⁸ Williams, "The Other Armies."

representative of this class of ANC leaders, most of who participated in the mass-based militant populist campaigning of the 1950s.⁸⁵⁹

The second group in the old guard category was made up of the working-class leaders of the 1940s and 1950s. These individuals were mostly former trade unionists and SACTU officer holders, including some former Communist office holders. John Nkadimeng, Moses Mabhida, and Joe Slovo represented this sect. They tended to adhere to a more radical socio-economic philosophy than Tambo's group. Further, these individuals were part of the multi-class and multi-communal campaigning of the 1950s and maintained an aversion to extreme violence. Their message was one of patience and caution developed through years in exile and a dislike for utopian sectarianism.⁸⁶⁰

The third group is one half of the younger generation of ANC members and included NEC leaders who spent their politically formative years in clandestine action perpetrating political violence. These members were more comfortable with these methods than the old guard and became radicalized during their years working underground. Mac Maharaj and Jacob Zuma, who did time at Robben Island for his role in the first MK campaign, were considered within this category.⁸⁶¹

The fourth and final group was the latter half of the young guard and was made up of those ANC members that spent most of their time in exile. Nearly their entire political experience has been in the external bureaucracy and they more than likely completed academic training at a foreign university. This group included Simon Makana, Francis Meli, and Thabo

⁸⁵⁹ Lodge, "State of Exile," pp.22-23.

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid.

Mbeki.⁸⁶² The final two groups of the younger generation were more radical and less conciliatory, which impacted the trajectory of peace talks during the negotiations phase of the conflict in the 1990s.

5.3.2.1 Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was a member of the Xhosa clan, which maintained close connections to the royal house of the Transkei. Rare among black South Africans at the time, Mandela was educated in the British tradition at a Methodist school. Perhaps due to his studies, Mandela remained a fond admirer of British institutions for most of his life. Following his studies, he went on to become a lawyer and founded his own practice in Johannesburg with his friend and future ANC compatriot Oliver Tambo.

Mandela was an eclectic personality who quoted Nehru and hung pictures of Lenin and Stalin in his office. Lodge notes that Mandela found the moral absolutism of the ‘professional revolutionary’ compelling and persuasive.⁸⁶³ He was also a cerebral leader who read widely. When he first began contemplating the move from non-violence to more aggressive actions, he studied classic military texts including Clausewitz’s *On War*, Mao’s *Strategic Problems of China’s Revolutionary War*, *The Revolt* by Menachem Begin, and several other legendary works on military strategy by Castro, Che Guevara, and like-minded revolutionaries.⁸⁶⁴ During his stay at Lilliesleaf farm in Rivonia, Mandela was influenced by Arthur Goldreich, a veteran of the Israeli Irgun and SACP member. Goldreich encouraged Mandela’s intellectual curiosity, and in

⁸⁶² Ibid.

⁸⁶³ Tom Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p.69.

⁸⁶⁴ Michael Burleigh, *Blood and Rage: A Cultural History of Terrorism*, London: Harper Collins, 2008, p.137.

addition to the aforementioned texts, Goldreich introduced Mandela to Lui Shao Chi's *How to be a Good Communist*, Harry Miller's *Menace in Malaya*, a book about the Filipino Huq guerillas, Field Marshall Montgomery's memoirs, and Eric Rosenthal's biography of General de Wet.⁸⁶⁵

Mandela's transformation from politico to radical occurred sometime in the mid-1950s. By definition, politicos reject acts of political violence because they are thought to encourage government repression and backlash from an organization's constituency.⁸⁶⁶ In the early 1950s, when Walter Sisulu was preparing to travel to China, Mandela asked his comrade to feel out the Chinese on whether or not they would be willing to supply the ANC with weapons, should the organization make the strategic decision to abandon non-violence for more a more militant path.

Mandela remained a radical, in accordance with Irvin's theory of militant nationalism, never making the next step to ideologue. In fact, when the decision to wage a campaign of sabotage was first adopted, it was Mandela who argued that this style of warfare was preferable because unlike a no-holds-barred insurgent campaign against civilians and soldiers alike, the sabotage campaign would still leave the option of negotiations a strong possibility. Even though the ANC would embark on a campaign to make South Africa ungovernable in the penultimate stage of the conflict, by that time the strategy of "talks about talks" was being implemented as a complement to the MK's relentless assault on South African COIN forces.

Mandela was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island on June 12, 1964. Much like his contemporaries in Northern Ireland, throughout his time in prison Mandela remained an active participant in the politics of the struggle. In 1965, in conjunction with Sisulu and other members of the ANC leadership on Robben Island, Mandela created the High Organ. This

⁸⁶⁵ Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life*, p.93.

⁸⁶⁶ Irvin, *Militant Nationalism*, p.28.

unofficial organization was dedicated to the daily concerns of prison life, as well as to maintaining a degree of cohesion among the group's members. The following year, Mandela went on hunger strike to protest the subpar living conditions within the prison. On two separate occasions, in 1976 and again in 1985, Mandela refused a reduction of his sentence on the grounds of conditionality. His stance was clear—the only way the insurgency would end is if the South African government legalized the ANC, dealt with the organization as a political party, and treated the group as a legitimate negotiating partner. Mandela was released from prison on February 11, 1990, and immediately began the next chapter of his storied career, suddenly recast as a savior and a proponent for peace.

5.3.2.2 Oliver Tambo

Oliver Reginald Tambo, or O.R. as he was known to his comrades, was born in 1917 in a rural town known as Mbizana, located in eastern Mpondoland. Along with Mandela, Tambo was one of the founders of the ANC Youth League (ANC YL) and served as its first National Secretary beginning in 1944. Four years later, in 1948, Tambo and Walter Sisulu were elected to the National Executive Committee of the ANC.⁸⁶⁷

The one-time attorney and schoolteacher, Tambo was one of the ANC's more militant leaders in his younger years. In 1949, he was one of the architects of the Program of Action, which sought to transform the ANC from a group that held meetings and petitioned the government to an organization capable of taking action, attracting a broad cross-section of people through mass actions, and launching campaigns of civil disobedience, including strikes,

⁸⁶⁷ African National Congress, "Oliver Tambo: Biography," <http://www.anc.org.za/showpeople.php?p=5>, site accessed April 24, 2012.

boycotts and other forms of non-violent resistance. Tambo participated in the Defiance Campaign in 1952 and was later one of 156 activists accused in the marathon 1956 Treason Trial. Following the Sharpeville massacre, the ANC handpicked Tambo to travel abroad to set up the organization's external infrastructure. With external support, he eventually established ANC missions in Egypt, Ghana, Morocco and London. By 1990, ANC missions operated in 27 countries around the world.⁸⁶⁸

From January to July 1961, Tambo traveled with Mandela all over Africa in an attempt to secure training and camp facilities for the MK, the ANC's nascent armed wing. The two lifelong friends and colleagues traveled to Tanzania, Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Senegal, Zambia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and several other African nations in a desperate effort to garner support for their struggle.⁸⁶⁹ In 1967, following the untimely death of ANC President General Chief Albert J. Luthuli, Tambo was appointed the acting president of the ANC, which was later officially confirmed at the Morogoro Conference in 1969. Tambo, who Mandela called "articulate yet not showy, confident but humble," received the endorsement of the majority of the ANC's top leadership.⁸⁷⁰

In addition to his duties as president of the ANC, Tambo served as the group's representative at the United Nations and was a member of the Revolutionary Council (RC). In 1985 he was re-elected as president and headed the Politico-Military Council (PMC) of the

⁸⁶⁸ These included all the permanent members of the UN Security Council (except China), two missions in Asia and one in Australia.

⁸⁶⁹ Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life*, pp.97-99.

⁸⁷⁰ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*, Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1994, p.384.

ANC, as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe.⁸⁷¹ Though often overshadowed by the lore of Mandela, Tambo was indefatigable in his quest to transform the ANC from a liberal-constitutionalist organization into a radical national liberation movement and then into a legitimate political party within South Africa.

Former ANC cadre Padraig O'Malley described Tambo as follows: "He could preside over meetings of forty people, very strong-willed people, and steer them in such a way that by the time he summarized the meeting's consensus, he managed to include everyone."⁸⁷²

O'Malley paints the picture of a true radical—prepared to use violence when and where necessary but also adept at political maneuvering where it proved advantageous. He similarly describes his former colleague as "very sharp," "irreplaceable," and "a man whose leadership you could not doubt because you could see that he gave everything of himself."⁸⁷³

Yet for all of his pragmatism and political savvy, Tambo did not shy away from using violence. His own words make this apparent. Speaking about the utility of continuing to rely on passive resistance in South Africa, Tambo proclaimed: "Today the oppressors are arming feverishly...The army buildup and the new Anti-Sabotage Act have completely nullified the strategic value of nonviolence, leaving the African with no alternative but to pursue the goal of freedom and independence by way of taking a 'tooth for a tooth' and meeting violence with violence."⁸⁷⁴ After three decades in exile, Tambo returned to South Africa in 1991. The ANC's

⁸⁷¹ African National Congress, "Oliver Tambo: Biography," <http://www.anc.org.za/showpeople.php?p=5>, site accessed April 24, 2012.

⁸⁷² Padraig O'Malley, *Shades of Difference: Mac Maharaj and the Struggle for South Africa*, New York: Viking, 2007, p.333.

⁸⁷³ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁴ Sheridan Johns and R. Hunt Davis, Jr. eds., *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress: The Struggle Against Apartheid, 1948-1960, A Documentary Survey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, p.136.

first legal national conference inside South Africa took place in Durban in July 1991, where Tambo was elected National Chairperson of the ANC. Before his death in 1993, Tambo would play a major role in the negotiations between the ANC and the South African government.

5.3.2.3 Joe Slovo

Joe Slovo was born Yossel Mashel Slovo in Lithuania in 1926. The son of a Jewish family that moved to South Africa when he was just nine, Slovo emerged as one of the most well-known leaders of the struggle against apartheid. He was also the face of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Before his stint as a leader of MK, he had served with the Allied forces during World War II and upon returning to South Africa he reenergized left-wing politics in that country.⁸⁷⁵ He joined the SACP in 1942 and was listed as a communist under the suppression of Communism Act. Throughout his life, Slovo remained an ardent Communist and committed believer in classic Marxism-Leninism. In June 1955, he represented the South African Congress of Democrats as a delegate to the Congress of the People. The same year, he was one of the authors of the Freedom Charter.⁸⁷⁶

As one of the leaders of the MK, Slovo was forced into exile in 1963 and lived at various times in the United Kingdom, Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia. Ellish and Sechaba remark, Slovo was *the* “key strategic thinker” in the underground army. He provided the intellectual and legal punching power behind the publication of the Strategy and Tactics document, authored at the Morogoro Conference. The Strategy and Tactics document guided ANC operations for two

⁸⁷⁵ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid*, pp.56-58.

⁸⁷⁶ Ibid.

decades. Writing under the pen name Sol Dubula in 1972, Slovo published a strategic memorandum that called for a greater emphasis on insurgent operations in the rural areas of the country.⁸⁷⁷

Slovo was married to Ruth First, the Communist Party Treasurer's daughter and avid anti-apartheid activist who was assassinated by a parcel-bomb constructed by the South African Security Police in 1982. By the end of his career with the MK, he rose to the rank of Chief of Staff. Like both Tambo and Mandela, Slovo was a radical—ready to use violence, as he demonstrated by helping plan the 1983 Church Street bombing, but open to talking as well, evidenced by his role in the negotiations during the early 1990s. In fact, Slovo is credited with inserting the “sunset clause,” included in the new constitution. This clause, which proved instrumental in reaching an agreement, allowed for “compulsory power-sharing for a fixed number of years in the period immediately following the adoption of the constitution.”⁸⁷⁸ Much of the South African state's propaganda efforts were directed against Slovo. Pretoria painted him as “a devil in human form” and planted stories that he was a colonel in the Soviet KGB.⁸⁷⁹

5.3.3 Ideology

The ideology of the African National Congress has been summarized by Tom Lodge as a blend of “African nationalism, Christian liberalism, clandestinity, technocracy, communist popular

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁸ “Negotiations: What Room for Compromise? Joe Slovo Opens the Debate on a Negotiating Strategy,” <http://www.sacp.org.za/people/slovo/negotiations.html>, South African Communist Party, site accessed April 26, 2012.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid.

frontism, Western Marxism, and indigenous working-class radicalism as well as residual elements of black consciousness.”⁸⁸⁰ This description may be an apt characterization of the totality of the ANC’s beliefs and evolution over the years, but the organization did undergo several identifiable shifts in its belief system between the 1950s and 1990s. In the 1950s, the ANC’s ideology was considered liberal and all-encompassing—based upon a political ideal of multiracialism and black majority rule through the parliamentary system. The most important strands of ANC ideology to untangle are communism, black consciousness, and nationalism. Each of these elements can only be analyzed when properly juxtaposed with the draconian nature of the South African apartheid system.

Apartheid Doctrine

The doctrine of apartheid called for the separate development, or “apartness,” of the various racial groups within South Africa. The system was institutionalized under the Afrikaner doctrines of the Dutch Reformed Church which stressed the superiority of white and European peoples over native Black Africans, Coloureds, and Asians.⁸⁸¹ The Afrikaners saw themselves as god’s “chosen people,” with the mission to protect and preserve the white race.⁸⁸² With the election of the all-Afrikaner National Party in 1948, apartheid was implemented thoroughly in the South African political system. The NP built upon decades of discriminatory laws including the Native Land Act (1913), the Immorality Act (1927), the Black Representation Act (1936), and the Native Trust and Land Act (1938), to enact further legislation marginalizing South

⁸⁸⁰ Lodge, “State of Exile,” p.24.

⁸⁸¹ The term “Coloured” refers to individuals of a ‘mixed’ racial background.

⁸⁸² Gerhard Schutte, “Afrikaner Historiography and the Decline of Apartheid: Ethnic Self-Reconstruction in Times of Crisis,” in Elizbaeth Tonkin, Maryon McDonald, and Malcolm Chapman (eds.), *History and Ethnicity*, London: Routledge, 1989, pp.216-231.

African Blacks, such as the Group Areas Act (1949), the Population Registration Act (1950), the Pass Laws Act (1952), and the Separate Amenities Act (1953). As a result of the homeland system, which divided the country into separate mini-states according to ethnic group, the Black population lived on 13 percent of the land, although it comprised 80 percent of the population.⁸⁸³ This policy of separate development was certainly separate, but far from equal. This brief overview of the apartheid system is therefore instrumental to the forthcoming analysis of the ANC's ideology, as much of the group's politics and policies were driven by a reaction to the dominance of the Afrikaner-led government.

Communism

Throughout the Cold War, the mere mention of the word Communism sounded alarm bells in Washington. So when the ANC began receiving external support from the Soviet Union and its coterie of Marxist-inspired allies, many observers jumped to the conclusion that the ANC was just another Communist lackey in the global proxy war between the Soviets and the Americans. Yet, a closer look reveals something different. To be sure, the ANC leadership (as well as its ranks-and-file) counted among its members ardent Communists of varying stripes. And the group's alliance with the SACP undoubtedly resulted in an intellectual exchange of ideas, with Marxism a prevailing theme in discussions on economic policy. But at its core, as Robert Fatton Jr. and several other South Africa experts have argued, the ANC was a populist movement first and foremost. In fact, in the 1980s, the Marxist wing of the ANC was expelled from the

⁸⁸³ Burleigh, *Blood and Rage*, p.140.

movement in a clear rejection of those who espoused an ideology “unambiguously rooted in the ideals and principles of socialism.”⁸⁸⁴

Thomas Karis has traced the evolution of the ANC’s relationship with Communism and has broken it down into three distinct phases: distance from the Communists; joint action with the Communists (and all races); and an increasing reliance on Communists in South Africa.⁸⁸⁵ More often than not, the ANC and the SACP had no significant differences on issues of strategy or policy. Both groups held an anti-imperialist stance and fought for national liberation. But the Communists’ ideological convictions and long-range agenda differed from the ANC, which viewed its relationship with the SACP as the means to an end of countering white domination in South Africa.

Black Consciousness

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) was a movement that flourished in defiance to, and as a direct result of, the apartheid movement. The crux of Black Consciousness can be summarized as follows: “black people could not expect help of any sort from whites” and as such “must work for their own self-improvement by their own efforts, first and foremost by rejecting the inferiority which had been thrust upon them by the apartheid government and by whites in general.”⁸⁸⁶ The leading spokesman and public face of the Black Consciousness Movement was a University of Natal medical student named Steve Biko, who himself was heavily influenced by

⁸⁸⁴ Robert Fatton, Jr., “The African National Congress of South Africa: The Limitations of a Revolutionary Strategy,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol.18, No.3, 1984, pp.593-595.

⁸⁸⁵ Thomas G. Karis, “South African Liberation: The Communist Factor,” *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1986/1987, p.273.

⁸⁸⁶ Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC & the South African Communist Party in Exile*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, p.70. For further reading, also see Gail Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.

the Black civil rights movement in the United States. Biko helped found the all-black South African Students' Organization (SASO), which went on to play an instrumental role in organizing support for the ANC and other black national groups, including the PAC.

Critics of the BCM argued that its rhetoric and insistence on black pride was no different than the discriminatory language of apartheid. Furthermore, many liberal White South Africans played a leading role in the various Black Nationalist movements, including both the ANC and the MK. Indeed, the MK itself was a multi-racial and multi-ethnic organization, reflective of South Africa's diverse population. But to many recruits entering these organizations in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Black Consciousness was a welcome message to the banal and at times out of touch ramblings of ANC/SACP leaders who preached about the vagaries of class warfare. The "young lions" seduced by the BCM were less interested in leftist politics and Marxism and instead united by 'neo-Africanism.'

The ANC and BCM did not always coexist peacefully. In an attempt to broaden its ideological appeal the ANC criticized the BCM and its "continued idealism, [its] 'confusion' over economic issues, and its inability to organize large-scale resistance."⁸⁸⁷ At other times, especially following the ban of BCM organizations, the ANC tried to poach BCM members by recruiting them into the organization and softening its criticism of Biko and his adherents.

Like other groups of its era, the ANC was far from a monolithic entity. Accordingly, its members adhered to a broad range of views, all of which affected the group's overall ideology. Obviously, organizations change over time. This is especially true of insurgent organizations, and even more so of insurgent organizations that enjoy longevity. For the ANC, anti-oppression

⁸⁸⁷ Anthony W. Marx, *Lessons of Struggle: South African Internal Opposition, 1960-1990*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.94.

and anti-racism were used the same way ‘national liberation’ was used in Cuba and Vietnam and anti-colonialism was used in Malaya and Kenya.⁸⁸⁸

5.3.4 Popular Support

In October 1978 the leadership of the MK traveled to Vietnam to meet with General Vo Nguyen Giap, a legendary insurgent theorist and practitioner. Giap’s advice to the Black South Africans was to work for the ‘support of the masses’ and to elevate ‘the primacy of the political.’⁸⁸⁹

These overlapping themes dominated the centerpiece of the ANC’s strategy and inexorably tied to the importance of gaining popular support from the population. The ANC followed a dual track approach toward realizing its popular support strategy.

First, by increasing operations within South Africa, the MK wanted to portray itself as the side with the most staying power. If the population saw the ANC/MK as the side most likely to win, support was sure to follow. The population had been subjugated for so long it needed the confidence necessary to join the struggle. According to this mindset, the frequency and impact of the attacks would raise the level of mass action inside the country, which would then give the insurgency strength in numbers. This could enable further attacks, leading to a mutually reinforcing cycle. Once the decision to switch from sabotage to violence in order to make the country ‘ungovernable,’ was taken, the ANC knew the support of the population was an absolute prerequisite.

Second, building a sound political base within South Africa allowed the insurgents to

⁸⁸⁸ O’Brien, “Blunted Spear,” p.39.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid, p.44.

‘exist, survive, grow and expand.’ ‘The primacy of the political’ meant that popular support for the ANC must be gained in the political realm first, which could then facilitate the military strategy. Remarkably, the emphasis on developing such a widespread political base would benefit the ANC tremendously when it came time for negotiations. By the 1990s, its leaders were seasoned diplomats.

The support of the population was not a *fait accompli*. The ANC knew this and therefore engaged in debates over changes in the group’s strategy. Whether or not to begin targeting civilians was a matter of serious disagreement within the group’s ranks. Many feared that the population would not support this strategy and the South African government would attempt to portray the insurgents as barbarians, inimical to negotiation and as a result, only to be dealt with through force, and force alone.

Backlash in the towns and villages was a palpable concern. At times, the ANC risked losing support as a result of intra-black violence in Natal between the Zulu-dominated Inkatha Movement and the Xhosa-dominated ANC. During the last decade of the conflict, the South African security services funded and trained Inkatha paramilitary fighters to wage a war within a war against the ANC. Occasionally, there was also violence between ANC and more militant black republican organizations.⁸⁹⁰ But the ANC’s support was not coerced or earned through fear. The argument could be made, and certainly was, that the continued South African riposte waged by the government under the banner of the apartheid system had much to do with the high levels of ANC popular support. “Every time this old firm [the SADF] launches a salvo against us [ANC/MK], our popularity rating among blacks takes a further leap,” remarked Joe Slovo in

⁸⁹⁰ Marsh and Szayna, “The South African Retrospective Case,” p.182.

his memoirs.⁸⁹¹

Like any successful insurgent group, the ANC supplied public goods to the community. The ANC in exile provided a nursery school, food, health care, clothing, and a salary (14 kwacha/month) to all members.⁸⁹² The ANC Department of Education and Culture offered secondary schooling to its constituents and had a staff of teachers and administrators. One of the most well-known institutions was the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), named after an MK cadre who was accused of murder and terrorism in 1977 and executed by hanging in 1979.⁸⁹³

So how successful was the ANC in gaining popular support? Marsh and Szayna reflect:

“Regarding popular support for the ANC mobilization, there is little question that the ANC had the support of the majority of the black population of South Africa. Neither the Black Nationalist organizations that competed with the ANC for support among blacks nor the group-based organizations (such as IFP) ever achieved anywhere near the influence of the ANC. And whereas the ANC could subsume the other groups under its umbrella, the other groups could not do the same with the ANC. In the same vein, the multiracial unionism represented by the ANC also elicited support from segments of all other groups in South Africa (coloreds, Asians, and whites).”⁸⁹⁴

Important to keep in perspective is that while the ANC deserves credit for gaining the popular support of the population, this was never a difficult choice for South African blacks. Unlike in other conflicts, where the COIN force and the insurgents duel for the support of the population, the Afrikaner government of South Africa failed to make an honest attempt to win the “hearts and minds” of black civilians. Some have argued that the Christian nationalism of the Afrikaner

⁸⁹¹ Joe Slovo, *The Unfinished Autobiography*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995, p.194.

⁸⁹² Lodge, “State of Exile,” p.5.

⁸⁹³ Ibid, p.12.

⁸⁹⁴ Marsh and Szayna, “The South African Retrospective Case,” p.177.

government, whose arguments were underpinned by strands of cultural essentialism, was behind the government's decision to eschew any serious attempts to positively influence the black population.⁸⁹⁵ Needless to say, the apartheid regime in South Africa included numerous racists among its ranks. When the NP first ascended to power, it granted amnesty to men serving jail sentences for colluding with the Nazis.⁸⁹⁶ Nevertheless, one key challenge the ANC faced in gaining popular support was publicizing its cause. This was achieved through growing its political base. Once a broad enough was formed, the group's political aims and its ongoing operations were communicated to the people—supporters, opponents, and undecided alike.

5.3.5 Public Relations/Propaganda

As a banned organization, information—including propaganda—was used to keep the population informed of the ANC's political views and aims, as well as on the operations of the ANC and its armed wing, MK. Since the population was only going to join the movement in large numbers if there was a groundswell of support and success was evident, propaganda helped bring the group's successes and achievements to light. Underground cells advocated the ANC cause through the distribution of literature, political discussions, and the recruitment of other individuals who could then participate along these same lines. Mphakama Mbete, an ANC underground activist who worked in Durban and KwaZulu-Natal, remembers, "lots of discussions, we reproduce some of the pamphlets, very selectively give them to people we trust outside this unit...we begin to identify individuals who we can trust, who we are sure of," in

⁸⁹⁵ Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa*: Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995.

⁸⁹⁶ Burleigh, *Blood and Rage*, pp.139-140.

different areas throughout the country.⁸⁹⁷

Existence in a state of exile poses serious challenges for an insurgent organization. By maintaining a strong link between the internal and external structures of the ANC, the group sought to ensure that cells outside of South Africa could keep those within the country functioning at a high level. Certainly, there were periods when the internal structure of the ANC was considered on life support. To counter this, and guard against extinction, the external machinery developed 'production and propaganda units,' which produced news sheets. The propaganda was then passed to the internal political machinery for distribution throughout the country.⁸⁹⁸

No analysis of the ANC's public relations dimension would be complete without mention of the anti-apartheid newspaper, *The Guardian*. For nearly thirty years, from 1937 to 1963, this "white run black paper" served as the voice of the oppressed. Because the newspaper was a veritable as a mouthpiece for the ANC (and even included ANC members among its staff) it was banned in 1952 and again in 1954. When the paper reappeared it would do so under a new name. One of these was *New Age*, which, when it reappeared in the early 1960s, immediately took up the banner of the ANC. Following the proscription of the ANC, *New Age* provided an outlet for official statements from the group and its leaders.⁸⁹⁹

Complementing the ANC's print propaganda was Radio Freedom, the radio propaganda arm of the ANC. Radio Freedom broadcast from different locations, including Tanzania,

⁸⁹⁷ Houston and Magubane, "The ANC Political Underground in the 1970s," p.395.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid, p.424.

⁸⁹⁹ James Zug, *The Guardian: the History of South Africa's Extraordinary Anti-Apartheid Newspaper*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007, p.195.

Zambia, Angola, Ethiopia, and Madagascar, but its station identifications all began the same way: “This is Radio Freedom, the voice of the African National Congress and its military wing Umkhonto We Sizwe.”⁹⁰⁰ This introduction followed a song called “3 a.m. Eternal,” by the British acid house band KLF, accompanied by the sound of machine gun fire. Radio Freedom emerged as a rallying cry for the struggle against apartheid and would prove to be a significant factor, along with *New Age*, in providing information about the ANC’s activities to its followers.

5.4 STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

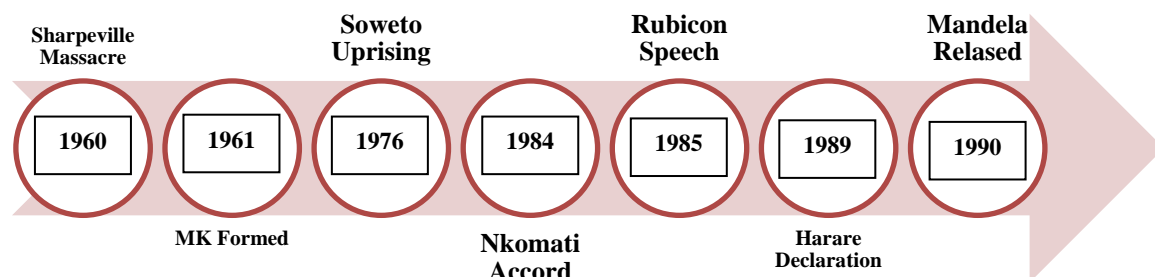


Figure 14: ANC Timeline Seminal Events and Attempts at Conflict Resolution

⁹⁰⁰ “Clandestine Stations of Southern Africa,” Southern African Clandestines of the 1970s, http://www.intervalsignals.net/countries/african_clandestines.htm, site accessed April 24, 2012.

5.4.1 Goals/Objectives

Shortly after its formation, the ANC stated its primary goals as the removal of racial discrimination from government, including parliament, as well as in areas of employment and education. To achieve this, the ANC employed peaceful propaganda, passive action, and continued movement, modeled after Gandhi's struggle for freedom and equality in India.⁹⁰¹

The Freedom Charter expressed grandiose political ideals, but ideals nonetheless grounded in the principles of those who advocated equality and proportional representation. "The people shall govern" and "All shall be equal before the law" were more than mere slogans of the anti-apartheid movement. They were also an invitation to the people of South Africa to create a democratic, nonracial, and undivided nation.⁹⁰² The Strategy and Tactics document produced at the Morogoro Conference called for the establishment of an independent black republic, which would represent the first step in the process of creating a socialist South Africa. This document was the ANC's first written program since the publication of the Freedom Charter fourteen years earlier.

⁹⁰¹ Heidi Holland, *The Struggle: A History of the African National Congress*, New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1989, pp.40-41.

⁹⁰² Karis, "Communist Factor," p.268.

5.4.2 Seminal Events

5.4.2.1 Sharpeville Massacre (1960)

On March 21, 1960, several thousand protesters gathered at a local police station in Sharpeville Township, located in the Transvaal (modern day Gauteng).⁹⁰³ The mobilization was in response to the Pass Laws, which required black South Africans to carry passes with them whenever they traveled outside their home districts. To ensure that a sizeable crowd would gather the day of the protest, PAC activists organized into task forces and went house to house to demand that people stay home from work and children stay home from school. In some cases, coercion was used to intimidate those who were unsure about participating in the protests.⁹⁰⁴ At the police station, some protesters offered themselves up for arrest since they did not have their pass books (they either burned them or purposefully left them at home), while the majority of the crowd was there to offer moral support.

Owing to the large crowd which had gathered by around 1 p.m. on the day of the incident, reinforcements were summoned from the Vereeniging district. Of the 400 policemen on the scene, 200 were white officers armed with guns (.303 rifles), and 200 were black officers armed with knobkerries, or clubs.⁹⁰⁵ There were also three armored cars equipped with heavy machine guns as well as additional ammunition. Though it is still a matter of debate, some accounts of the protest recalled the crowd as aggressive and hostile. Allegedly, protesters were

⁹⁰³ While estimates vary, Tom Lodge indicates that 4,000 would be a “very generous estimate” for the number of protesters gathered at the police station. Tom Lodge, *Sharpeville: An Apartheid Massacre and its Consequences*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, p.100.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp.90-94.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid, p.97.

spitting at the police and chanting slogans such as '*Izwe lethu*,' which translates to 'this land is ours,' and 'Cato Manor,' which was the site where nine policemen had been killed, less than a month before the Sharpeville protests. Others in the crowd offered the thumbs up 'Africa' sign frequently used by the ANC.

A disconnect between the South African Special Branch and the local police in Sharpeville further contributed to the confusion on that fateful day. Lodge notes that the Special Branch officers were "contemptuous of the local police" and instead relied on the township superintendent for intelligence. The Special Branch in Johannesburg also retained a dense network of informants within the PAC.⁹⁰⁶ The disconnect between state and local security forces contributed to differing perceptions of the threat posed by the protests. In short, the local police were less experienced in dealing with instances of mass protest and as a result, were both over-armed and over-zealous. Moreover, the night prior to the protests, small-scale skirmishes broke out between the police and Task Force members in Sharpeville. The security forces were pelted with rocks and threatened with iron bars.⁹⁰⁷

To disperse the crowd, police fired tear gas and used baton charges, both of which were unsuccessful in breaking up the protest. Sabre jets and Harvard trainers flew overhead in an attempt to scare those gathered, but to no avail. At one point, a small-time crook named Geelbooi Mofokeng, who had been interrogated and beaten by the police following the skirmishes the night before the protests, made his way to the front of the crowd with a gun. He raised the gun to shoot and when a protestor saw this, the individual diverted Mofokeng's gun skyward, as he fired two shots directly into the air. In response, the police opened fire into the

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.101.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.102.

crowd, unleashing a total of 1,344 rounds of ammunition.⁹⁰⁸ In all, 69 protesters were killed.

The events in Sharpeville on Monday March 21, 1960 became a symbol of injustice for the anti-apartheid movement and especially for the ANC.

Clear parallels can be drawn between the events at Sharpeville and Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland. In both cases, the security forces were disproportionately armed for the threat that presented itself. Undisputedly, in both situations unarmed civilians were killed by the police. Finally, both incidents served as a major rallying cry and recruiting boon for the organizations under examination in each case, the ANC and the PIRA, respectively.

When applied to contemporary counterinsurgency, the lesson seems obvious: security forces should avoid killing unarmed civilians, especially at a public event like a protest or a march, where escalation can be avoided through carefully orchestrated contingency planning. Civilian casualties are a regrettable fact of warfare. This is particularly the case when insurgents use civilians as human shields or melt into the surrounding population following an attack. It is difficult to predict which incidents will resonate and which will not. Therefore, COIN forces must minimize the opportunity for seminal events, like a Sharpeville, Black July, or a Bloody Sunday, to act as a catalyst for the insurgency.

5.4.2.2 Soweto Uprising (1976)

The Soweto Uprising, also known as June 16th, took place on that date in 1976 in Soweto Township. The uprising began as a series of high school student-led protests, organized by the SASM Action Committee, in response to the introduction of the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974 which declared Afrikaans as the official language of instruction in local schools for science

⁹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.105.

and tradecraft subjects. Approximately 15,000 students assembled and marched to Orlando West Junior Secondary School. The police initially attempted to disperse the crowd through tear gas but when that failed, they shot into the crowd, killing two children.⁹⁰⁹ When news of the killings spread, others joined the protest, including Indian and Colored teens. Violent riots spread throughout Soweto, the Transvaal and to the Cape. Government buildings were vandalized. A favorite target was state-owned beer halls and liquor shops, two sources of revenue that generated funding for township administration. According to Price, the response to police brutality that ignited the Soweto Uprising was “unprecedented in its scope and endurance” and transformed Soweto into a “war zone.”⁹¹⁰

In clashes throughout the township, protesters hurled rocks, bricks, and stones at the police, who responded in kind with gunfire from pistols and automatic rifles.⁹¹¹ After the first three days of the uprising, the press reported that 97 people (including two whites) had been killed and another 1,118 individuals wounded. In total, 430 schools were burned down, 124 administration board buildings were destroyed, and 222 board vehicles were put beyond use.⁹¹² In the beginning of the uprising the protestors’ anger was directed at Bantu education and Afrikaans instruction, but soon evolved into an outpouring of hatred whose ire became the apartheid system as a whole.

⁹⁰⁹ Beck, *The History of South Africa*, p.160.

⁹¹⁰ Robert M. Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa, 1975-1990*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp.46-47. Also see Alan Brooks and Jeremy Brickhill, *Whirlwind Before the Storm*, London: International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1980; and Republic of South Africa, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry Into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere*, Cillie Commission Report, Pretoria: Government Printer, 1980.

⁹¹¹ Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis*, p.47.

⁹¹² Ibid, p.48.

Soweto was yet another turning point in the conflict. To the ANC, it was proof that there was such a high degree of virulence for the South African state that mass mobilization against apartheid was possible on previously unthinkable levels. Up until 1976, the insurgency had not enjoyed a groundswell of spontaneous action as it did during the Soweto Uprising. In response to the violence, the COIN force reacted by clamping down even harder on suspected insurgents. In the years immediately following the uprising, the number of “deaths in detention” skyrocketed.⁹¹³ “Deaths in detention” was a euphemism for prisoners killed by the security services while being detained. Official causes of death offered by the authorities ranged from death while “attempting to escape” to “suicide” to “unknown causes.”⁹¹⁴

5.4.2.3 Botha’s Rubicon Speech (1985)

A new constitution was approved by an all-white referendum in November 1983 and took effect in September 1984. Discussions on changes to the constitution had occurred for several years leading up to its implementation and the anticipation of the black community for tangible changes was palpable. However, even though the new constitution granted more political rights to both the Coloured and Asian populations, it did nothing to address many of the grievances voiced by the black community leading up to this point. Massive riots erupted throughout the townships over the course of the next ten months. Then, in July 1985, the government declared a state of emergency in 36 districts. A month later, in August 1985, South African president P.W. Botha delivered his now infamous “Crossing the Rubicon” speech, which dispelled any hopes of

⁹¹³ Meli, *A History of the ANC*, pp.186-187.

⁹¹⁴ Beck, *The History of South Africa*, p.161. For more on “deaths in detention” and the level of police brutality during this time, see Andre Brink, *A Dry White Season*, New York: Morrow, 1980.

addressing black citizens' demands.⁹¹⁵ This speech was a bold affirmation of the apartheid system and a clear signal to the ANC that Mandela would not be released from prison, nor would the pass laws be completely eliminated. Furthermore, there would be no fourth chamber in the South African parliament reserved for 'urban' Africans and there would also be no declaration of a South African unitary state.

Botha's 'Rubicon' speech alienated Pretoria from the international community even further. Efforts to impose economic sanctions on the government intensified. In 1986, the Reagan administration introduced the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act in the United States. The value of South Africa's currency, the rand, declined in value and Botha's cabinet worried that if the government failed to make preparations for negotiating with the insurgents, the ANC would achieve its goal of making South Africa ungovernable and the country would slide further into a state of anarchy.

5.4.3 Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

5.4.3.1 Nkomati Accord (1984)

The Nkomati Accord was a non-aggression pact signed by the governments of South Africa and Mozambique on March 16, 1984. While not an attempt at conflict resolution between the government and the insurgents, this particular accord is relevant to this analysis because of the effect it had on the conflict. Although it did not involve the insurgents per se, it did involve the COIN force/host-nation government, and a government that provided valuable support to the insurgents.

⁹¹⁵Marsh and Szanya, "The South African Retrospective Case," pp.159-160.

The crux of the agreement was that each state would stop supporting active insurgent movements targeting the others' government. In the years leading up to the accord, the People's Republic of Mozambique had provided support to the ANC while the Republic of South Africa assisted RENAMO in its quest to destabilize the FRELIMO-controlled government of Mozambique.⁹¹⁶ RENAMO was the brainchild of Portuguese and Rhodesian Special Forces and had no ties to the tribal structure in Mozambique.⁹¹⁷ At first, Mozambique's leader Samora Machel, failed to follow through on his end of the bargain. In turn, Pretoria continued to supply RENAMO with weapons and supplies. RENAMO insurgents conducted deadly operations against the government in Maputo. No longer able to withstand the attacks, Machel agreed to expel the ANC/MK from Mozambique and close down the group's bases. For its part, South Africa offered economic and infrastructural aid and support to the government of Mozambique.⁹¹⁸ The regional proxy war ended with the signing of the Rome General Peace Accords, signed as part of the end of the Mozambican civil war. The United Nations Mission to Mozambique (ONUMOZ) supervised the détente until 1994. Following the Nkomati Accords, MK moved its command structure from Maputo, Mozambique to parts of Zambia and Angola.⁹¹⁹

5.4.3.2 Harare Declaration (1989)

Adopted on 21 August 1989 by an Organization of African Unity (OAU) sub-committee on Southern Africa, the Harare Declaration laid the groundwork for the negotiations that would

⁹¹⁶ Meli, *A History of the ANC*, pp.194-195.

⁹¹⁷ Kevin A. O'Brien, *The South African Intelligence Services: From Apartheid to Democracy, 1948-2005*, London: Routledge, 2011, p.124.

⁹¹⁸ Ibid.

⁹¹⁹ Lodge, "State of Exile," p.10.

commence the following year. The declaration stated, in no uncertain terms, that a “demonstrable readiness on the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations.”⁹²⁰ This unilateral declaration on the part of the ANC presented the group in a conciliatory light. It was also a response to changing conditions on the ground. Leading up to this point, Mandela was moved to less restrictive quarters where he met with a wide range of political contacts from all sides of the ideological spectrum. The most promising meetings were those with the individual who would eventually become his counterpart, F.W. de Klerk.

Just as with every facet of the negotiating process between the ANC and the South African government, the Harare Declaration was not without its caveats. In all, six preconditions were outlined⁹²¹:

- Lifting the state of emergency
- Ending restrictions on political activity
- Releasing those jailed without trial
- Legalizing all political organizations
- Releasing all political prisoners
- Granting clemency to those on death row

The insurgents made it clear that they were prepared to continue their guerilla campaign

⁹²⁰Kgolane Alfred Rudolph, “Celebrating and Commemorating Twenty Years of the Harare Declaration,” South African History Online (SAHO), <http://www.sahistory.org.za/articles/harare-declaration>, site accessed April 27, 2012.

⁹²¹ For further reading, see Organization of African Union Ad-Hoc Committee on South Africa, “Harare Declaration: Declaration of the OAU Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa on the Question of South Africa,” African National Congress, <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=3856>, site accessed April 28, 2012.

against the state. The Harare Declaration demonstrated to the South African government that the ANC leadership was also prepared to think about a peaceful solution to the conflict in very concrete and achievable ways. The Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) followed the Harare Declaration with anti-apartheid protests throughout the country. De Klerk recognized the olive branch and responded in kind by easing restrictions on antigovernment marches in Cape Town and the surrounding areas, so long as they remained peaceful and non-violent. In addition, de Klerk authorized the release of several high profile political prisoners, including Walter Sisulu, who went on to work with Archbishop Desmond Tutu to help move even closer to a peaceful transition away from apartheid.

5.4.4 Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS)

The ANC insurgency in South Africa featured a powerful concoction of factors, including external support from the USSR, the growing unpopularity of the apartheid system, and numerous safe havens that abutted the South African state at different points throughout the conflict. When weighed alongside the military acumen of the South African COIN force, these factors combined to produce a mutually hurting stalemate. After passing through three phases, described in detail below, the insurgency became ripe for resolution and led to a political agreement between Pretoria and Mandela's ANC.

5.4.4.1 Sabotage and Phase I Revolutionary Warfare (1960-1965)

When the ANC was initially declared illegal in 1960, some in the South African security establishment thought that this would be a debilitating blow to the group. The result, however, was to push the insurgents underground and hasten the start of the conflict. By the time it was

officially banned, the ANC had been planning a move to the underground for the better part of the previous decade. The Mandela Plan, more commonly referred to as the M-Plan, was outlined seven years before the group was ever banned. The M-Plan was a watershed event in the history of the ANC because it marked the point where the organization transitioned from mass democratic politics to revolutionary warfare.⁹²²

Sometimes forcing an insurgency underground is the prelude to destroying the organization. But the underground structures laid out by the M-Plan actually called for an expansion, not a retraction or stasis of the ANC. “This was not a classic conception for a tightly-knit vanguard underground,” according to Suttner.⁹²³ This organizational structure would remain the style of the ANC for most of the duration of the insurgency. In 1963, the Sabotage Act was passed. Like internment without trial in Northern Ireland, the Sabotage Act gave the authorities the right to detain individuals for up to 90 days without trial. Many prominent ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were arrested under the Sabotage Act and placed in jail for extended periods of time. In response to the raid on Lilliesleaf farm and the Rivonia trial that followed, the insurgents looked to move their operations outside South Africa. Operation Mayibuye was the ANC’s plan to establish an external network and was implemented beginning in 1963.

During the first phase of the insurgency, there was little evidence of the stalemate that was to ensue years later. On the contrary, the COIN force most certainly retained the upper hand. In 1963, the Security Branch began conducting ‘pseudo-operations’ against the insurgents. ‘Pseudo-operations’ are operations where government forces disguise themselves as insurgents

⁹²² Suttner, p.129.

⁹²³ Ibid, p.131.

and infiltrate insurgent-controlled territory. These operations are typically conducted alongside insurgent defectors who have been ‘flipped’ by the COIN force.⁹²⁴ In the case of South Africa, the insurgent defectors were known as *askaris* (Swahili for fighters) and were recruited from both the ANC and the PAC.⁹²⁵ Pseudo-operations in South Africa were modeled on similar British operations against the Mau Mau (1952-1960) as well as on the Selous Scouts in Rhodesia. Used to great effect, pseudo-operations involved *askaris* leading unsuspecting ANC fighters back into South Africa where they would be ambushed, abducted, or killed by the South African security forces. The *aksaris* were able to provide the COIN force with extremely valuable intelligence on the current state of the ANC/MK, which was then used against the insurgents.

Another genuine effort to blunt the insurgency during its initial phases was the creation of the Bureau of State Security (BOSS) Z-Squad, formed in the mid-1960s. As will be discussed further in the next section on underground networks and the ANC in exile, the Z-Squad was a unit with the responsibility of eliminating ANC activists in the townships. Since bringing the supporters and sympathizers of the ANC to trial was both difficult and costly, the Z-Squad circumvented this problem by killing these individuals.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁴ Lawrence E. Cline, “Pseudo-Operations and Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Other Countries,” U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) monograph, June 2005.

⁹²⁵ Kevin A. O’Brien, “Counter-Intelligence for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare: The South African Police Security Branch, 1979-1990,” *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol.16, No.3, Autumn 2001, pp.37-41.

⁹²⁶ For a fascinating firsthand account of the Z-Squad, see Gordon Winter, *Inside BOSS: South Africa’s Secret Police*, London: Penguin Books, 1981.

5.4.4.2 Underground Networks and the ANC in Exile (1966-1976)

The second phase of the insurgency was a decade-long block stretching from 1966 to 1976. During this period, the insurgents steered their efforts toward spreading the reach of their underground networks within South Africa while building a mobile force in ANC-friendly countries. In August and September 1967, the Luthuli Detachment of the ANC/MK teamed with ZAPU/ZIPRA to fight a pitched battle against Rhodesian COIN forces in the Wankie Game Reserve near the border of Zambia and Botswana.⁹²⁷ MK/ZIPRA joint operations continued from December 1967 until July 1968 during the Sipolilo Campaign fought against a combined South African-Rhodesian security force detachment.

To deal with the mounting threat posed by the insurgents, the South African government passed the Terrorism Act Number 83 of 1967, which similar to the Sabotage Act of 1963, allowed the authorities to detain individuals suspected of terrorist activities for up to 60 days without trial. At this point in the conflict, both the insurgents and the counterinsurgents began to abandon prior restraints. At the Morogoro Conference in 1969, the MK presented the Strategy and Tactics document which signified the official beginning of no-holds barred armed struggle. Not to be outdone, the Z-Squad stepped up its campaign of assassinations.⁹²⁸ As assassination became a favored tool of the COIN force, South African Special Forces assumed an even greater role in the conflict.

For the majority of this phase, Pretoria enjoyed a *cordon sanitaire*; until 1974, white settler governments or nations too economically dependent on the apartheid regime to make

⁹²⁷ This battle is commonly referred to as the 'Wankie Campaign' in the literature. For a detailed case study of the Wankie Campaign, see Rendani Moses Ralinala et al., "The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns," SADET ch.12

⁹²⁸ Kevin A. O'Brien, "The Use of Assassination as a Tool of State Policy: South Africa's Counter-Revolutionary Strategy 1979-1992," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol.13, Iss.2, p.1110. Also see O'Brien, "Counter-Intelligence for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare," p.42.

independent foreign policy decisions buffered South Africa. When the last Portuguese troops left Mozambique and Angola, and the government of Rhodesia collapsed, the ANC moved into these countries and devised a strategy referred to as “hacking the way home,” back to South Africa. The COIN force countered with its ‘Total National Strategy Policy,’ announced in a 1975 *White Paper on Defense*. This document laid out Pretoria’s intention to conduct total and complete warfare. It explicitly made reference to the ‘total onslaught’ being waged by the ANC insurgents and countered that the South African government needed to meet this ‘total onslaught’ with a ‘total strategy.’⁹²⁹

The ‘total strategy’ included incorporating lessons from conflicts in Rhodesia and Namibia as well as implementing British imperial policing techniques used in Kenya. The security forces, including the British South African Police (BSAP) and SAP personnel, were trained in sabotage, assassination, and counterinsurgency.⁹³⁰ No longer surrounded by friendly states, South African COIN forces went beyond their borders to capture and kill insurgents in what were termed “hot pursuit” operations.⁹³¹ From 1975-1976, South Africa participated in the civil war in Angola under the banner of Operation Savannah.⁹³² ‘Operation Disa’/’Silwer’ was another operation launched to support UNITA in Angola.⁹³³ With the COIN forces focusing on events outside its own borders, the Soweto Uprising erupted in 1976 and altered the domestic

⁹²⁹ Ibid, p.83.

⁹³⁰ Ibid, p.41.

⁹³¹ Abel Esterhuyse and Evert Jordaan, “The South African Defence Force and Counterinsurgency, 1966-1990,” in Deane-Peter Baker and Evert Jordan, *South Africa and Contemporary Counterinsurgency: Roots, Practices, Prospects*, Claremont: UCT Press, 2010, p.113.

⁹³² For more on Operation Savannah, see David Williams and Greg Mills, “The Military Role in Political Victory: South Africa, Namibia, and Apartheid,” in David Richards and Greg Mills, *Victory Among People: Lessons from Countering Insurgency and Stabilising Fragile States*, London: RUSI, 2011, pp.208-211.

⁹³³ O’Brien, “Special Forces,” p.101.

political landscape entirely. Now that the ANC perceived a broad enough base of support *within* South Africa, and with Pretoria distracted, the insurgents launched a campaign of armed propaganda and ‘People’s War.’

5.4.4.3 Armed Propaganda and People’s War (1977-1984)

The ANC leadership visited Vietnam in 1978 to meet with former insurgents to learn Vietnamese lessons that could benefit the ANC. The report for this trip became the basis for the ANC’s ‘Green Book,’ also known as the “Theses on our Strategic Line,” and influenced by the Politico-Military Strategy Commission meeting involving Tambo, Mbeki, Joe Modise, Moses Mabhida, Joe Gqabi, and Joe Slovo. One of the takeaways from the Vietnam trip was the need to increase operational tempo, or optempo. Indeed, the ANC increased its activity steadily between 1977 and 1986.

With the increase in insurgent incidents, SADF Chief General Magnus Malan ordered the South African Police to create an intelligence collection capability in neighboring Namibia, modeled on Rhodesia’s Selous Scouts. The unit formed under Operation ‘K’ and came to be called *Koevoet* (Afrikaans for crowbar), although its’ official title was The South African Police Counter-Insurgency Unit. *Koevoet* went operational in 1979.⁹³⁴ That same year, the National Security Management System (NSMS) was created following a series of committees designed to think about the best ways to fight insurgents operating in South West Africa. The Territory Counterinsurgency Committees (GTK) was the most popular of these.⁹³⁵ In 1983, the *Koevoet* leadership was sent to a farm outside of Pretoria called Vlakplaas and set about reconfiguring

⁹³⁴ “Counter-Intelligence for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare,” p.43.

⁹³⁵ O’Brien, “The Use of Assassination,” p.112.

different elements of the covert operators structure and command. The result was the creation of C1, a unit designed to identify and track ANC and PAC insurgents in order to ‘flip’ them to work against their former comrades.⁹³⁶

Rearranging sub-units within the security forces did help the COIN forces become better organized, but it did not put an end to increasingly bold insurgent attacks. In 1980, the same year that the SADF absorbed soldiers from Rhodesia, the ANC conducted a spectacular attack on the SASOL oil refinery. In a February 1981 speech to Parliament, Chief General Malan declared, “we shall, by means of our security forces, locate and destroy hostile terrorist bases, wherever they may be established.” This statement would guide the Special Forces’ security strategy throughout the 1980s.⁹³⁷

In January 1982 the ANC attacked the Koeberg nuclear power plant. At the end of the year, the COIN forces conducted a cross border raid into Lesotho that killed 42 people, 30 of whom were ANC fighters.⁹³⁸ Operation Drama was set into motion in 1983. The crux of this effort was the creation of ‘Super ZAPU,’ a spoiler group used to destabilize the government of Zimbabwe. Also in 1983, ‘Delta-40’ was set up within the DMI. ‘Delta-40’ replaced the ‘Z-Squads’ as the primary vehicle for the South African security forces policy of assassination. These covert units were not constrained by territory or boundaries; instead, they were sanctioned to chase insurgents into any country where they fled. Between 1981 and 1984, Mozambique was raided twelve separate times.

⁹³⁶ Ibid, p.46.

⁹³⁷ O’Brien, “Special Forces,” p.96.

⁹³⁸ Ibid, p.98.

5.4.4.4 Insurrection and Ungovernability (1985-1987)

Government ministers and military leaders within South Africa's security establishment were confounded that a poorly organized, ill-equipped insurgent force like the ANC could pose such a serious challenge to the hegemony of the state. To fix the problem, they decided to throw money at it. Between 1985 and 1990, the South African Police (SAP) budget more than doubled.⁹³⁹ The SAP and what came to be known as the 'Third Force' were foundational elements of the South African government's new strategy, known as 'Total Counter-Revolutionary Strategy.' The 'Third Force' was the column of security force personnel that operated outside of the law, beholden to no particular agency or organization.⁹⁴⁰ Under Operation Marion, DMI and Special Forces personnel trained members of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party in the Caprivi Strip in northern South West Africa.⁹⁴¹ Due in large measure to the upsurge in attacks during this period, it was not uncommon for the COIN forces to overreact.

In June 1985, the South African unit known as Recce 5 launched a raid into Botswana that killed 12 people, injured six, and destroyed five houses.⁹⁴² Unfortunately, the operation was based on faulty intelligence and the individuals targeted were not ANC insurgents.⁹⁴³ During Operation KATZEN in July 1986, the Army Intelligence unit affectionately known as 'The

⁹³⁹ O'Brien, "Counter-Intelligence for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare," p.38.

⁹⁴⁰ For the most comprehensive picture of the Third Force, see Stephen Ellis, "The Historical Significance of South Africa's Third Force," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol.24, No.2, June 1998, pp.261-269.

⁹⁴¹ O'Brien, "The Use of Assassination," p.120.

⁹⁴² The Recces played a major role in the COIN conflicts throughout Southern Africa and were utilized in a range of ways, including conducting direct operations against insurgents, pseudo-operations, regional destabilization, and training proxy forces. Anita M. Grossman, "Lost in Transition: The South African Military and Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.19, No.4, 2008, p.546.

⁹⁴³ O'Brien, "Special Forces," p.99.

Hammer’ was conducting urban counterinsurgency operations in the Eastern Cape when it shot and killed four activists from Cradock.⁹⁴⁴ In 1986, ‘Delta-40’ was transformed into the Civil Cooperation Bureau. While this was a far more benign sounding name, the unit was no less deadly. Other changes during this same period included the establishment of the Joint Security Staff (Gesamentlike Veiligheidstaf, referred to as Geveilstaf, or GVS) within the Strategic Communications (Stratkom) and the formation of the Teen Rewolusionere Inligting Taakspan (Counter-Revolutionary Intelligence Task Team, or Trewits).

Each reorganization was accompanied by more sophisticated operations on the part of the South Africans, but as the mid-1980s wore on, the stalemate grew further entrenched.

Undeterred, Pretoria fought on. In August 1986, one month after the Cradock debacle, the COIN forces adopted a document entitled *Strategie ter bekamping van die ANC*, or Strategy for the Combating of the ANC, which had at its core two objectives: neutralize the ANC leadership; and neutralize the power and influence of well-connected individuals within the organization.⁹⁴⁵

Four months later, the document was updated with more specific goals this time—neutralize ‘intimidators’ through formal and informal policing; and identify and eliminate insurgent leaders, “especially those with charisma.”⁹⁴⁶ The reference to ‘informal policing’ built upon a report proposed by Major General Abraham ‘Joup’ Joubert, Commander of the South African Special Forces. In his report, known as the ‘Joubert Plan,’ the SF leader argued for increased autonomy for the Special Forces and an expanded role to go after MK fighters.

As the late 1980s approached, a mutually hurting stalemate was apparent to even the

⁹⁴⁴ O’Brien, “Assassination,” p.121.

⁹⁴⁵ O’Brien, “Assassination,”

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

most biased observers. The apartheid system was buckling from a combination of international pressure, a faltering economy, and relentless attacks by the insurgents, even in the face of stepped up efforts by the security forces, to include extralegal actions like assassinations. The final phase of the conflict, “Laying the Groundwork for Negotiations,” will be analyzed at the conclusion of this chapter.

5.4.5 Decision-Making Structure and Process

5.4.5.1 The Decision to Use Violence

The ANC’s decision to abandon sabotage and embark on a campaign of violence against the South African state was made following years of on-again, off-again discussions among the group’s leadership. In July 1960, the SACP secured a promise from the Chinese to provide its members with military equipment and training once a guerilla campaign was initiated.⁹⁴⁷ The actual move to violence did not occur until July 1961 at a meeting in Stanger. Though Chief Luthuli was opposed to the move, he eventually capitulated and Mandela went on to form MK shortly thereafter. Those in attendance at the meeting recall Mandela as “unrelenting in championing the turn to violence.”⁹⁴⁸ This was a far cry from the same individual who, only a few years earlier, believed that the blacks in South Africa, as well as most of the ANC’s members were “morally unready for direct and forceful confrontation with state authority.”⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴⁷ Tom Lodge, “Revolution Deferred: From Armed Struggle to Liberal Democracy: The African National Congress in South Africa,” in Bruce W. Drayton and Louis Kriesberg, *Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: Moving from Violence to Sustainable Peace*, London: Routledge, 2009, p.157.

⁹⁴⁸ Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life*, pp.89-90.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.62.

So what made Mandela switch his position on the utility of violence in against Pretoria? While it is difficult to isolate one factor that contributed to Mandela's conversion from politico to radical, several events likely played a role, including the failure of the anti-pass law campaign, the Sharpeville massacre, mass detentions and arrests throughout the country, and the banning of the ANC and other Black Nationalist organizations. Perhaps one comment, offered to the court by Mandela following his 1964 arrest for sabotage, best summarizes his thinking at the time of MK's founding. The ANC, he explained, could not "continue preaching nonviolence at a time when the Government met our peaceful demands with force."⁹⁵⁰

While there were undoubtedly elements within the ANC and SACP that were uneasy about using violence, many members of the MK were more certain. Since the leadership and rank and file MK members were typically well-educated professionals and trade unionists, these were the individuals most directly affected by the policies of the apartheid state.⁹⁵¹

5.4.5.2 Talks about Talks

In South Africa, "talks about talks" was a euphemism for the informal and secret talks that took place between representatives of the South African apartheid government and members of the ANC's leadership cadre. Since the talks were informal and secret, they were construed as having low exit costs; the participants could withdraw at a moment's notice and maintain plausible deniability about participating in the first place. Talks about talks in South Africa were a three-track process that included a troika of initiatives—the Mandela initiative, the intermediary

⁹⁵⁰ Roger B. Beck, *The History of South Africa*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000, p.144.

⁹⁵¹ Lodge, "Revolution Deferred," p.158 in Drayton and Kriesberg, *Conflict Transformation*.

initiative, and the civil society initiative.⁹⁵²

The Mandela initiative began in earnest in 1985 when the ANC statesman sent a letter to the South African Minister of Justice, Kobie Coetsee. The two maintained an informal, but ongoing dialogue for the next several years. Coetsee visited Mandela when he was hospitalized and later when Mandela was moved to Pollsmoor prison. A committee of National Intelligence Service (NIS) members also attended some of these talks. The three most important issues during these discussions were the fate of ANC political prisoners, the continued criminalization of ANC membership, and the increased levels of violence between both insurgents and the state but also within black communities and townships. Mandela made clear that certain issues were non-negotiable at this stage—violence, the ANC’s relationship with the SACP, and relinquishing the demand for majority rule.⁹⁵³ In no small measure due to these ongoing talks, when De Klerk succeeded Botha as the President of South Africa, he knew that in Mandela he was dealing with a pragmatist whom he could trust. Preliminary talks bred familiarity.

The second major negotiating track was the intermediary initiative. Intermediaries were a logical path to pursue because of the need to retain low exit costs and the desire of those involved to avoid any perceived weakness that would result if the talks were made public. In effect, this negotiating track was started by a small group of British business leaders who then arranged for follow up meetings between ANC members and influential Afrikaners in London.⁹⁵⁴ Eight separate meetings were held between October 1987 and July 1990.⁹⁵⁵ The

⁹⁵² John Darby and Roger MacGinty eds., *The Management of Peace Processes*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, pp.19-26.

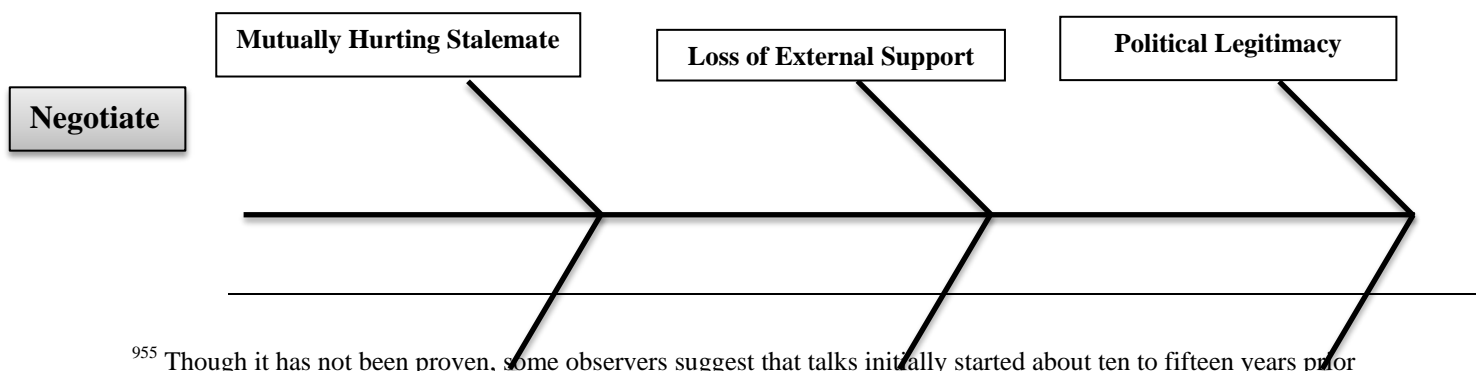
⁹⁵³ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid, p.22.

negotiations went through iterations of what issues were most important and refined them to focus almost exclusively on those issues deemed most salient to the commencement of official negotiations. These included the release of Mandela from prison, the support of white South Africans for a peace process, ANC violence, a realistic timetable for transition, the Communist factor, sanctions, ANC views on power sharing, and the composition of the ANC leadership.⁹⁵⁶

The third line of operation in the “talks about talks” process was the civil society process. Unlike the Mandela initiative or the intermediary initiative, the civil society initiative was public. Between 1985 and 1989, over seventy five meetings took place, most of them organized by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for Africa, or IDASA.⁹⁵⁷ The goal of all “talks about talks” was to elevate the pre-negotiations to actual negotiations but ironing out the seemingly intractable debates before agreeing to sit down for official negotiations. This strategy undoubtedly had a positive impact on official peace talks once these begun and paved the way for the Congress for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA).

5.4.6 Why did the ANC negotiate?



⁹⁵⁵ Though it has not been proven, some observers suggest that talks initially started about ten to fifteen years prior to these “talks about talks.” Philip Frankel, *Soldiers in a Storm: The Armed Forces in South African’s Democratic Transition*, Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, p.2.

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid, p.23.

⁹⁵⁷ B.W. Kruger, “Pre-negotiation in South Africa (1985-1993): A Phaseological Analysis of the Transitional Negotiations,” University of Stellenbosch, 1998.

Figure 15: ANC Negotiation Factors

Following over thirty years of armed insurrection against the South African state, by 1990 the African National Congress believed that significant changes were on the horizon. Part of this was the ascension of F.W. De Klerk, who succeeded Botha in late 1989. In De Klerk, the ANC believed they had someone they could negotiate with. But this alone would not be enough to countenance a transformation from insurgent group to political party. Even with the benefit of hindsight, disentangling the many factors leading up to the ANC's decision to negotiate with the South African government is difficult. Yet, three main factors account for this phenomenon: the recognition of a mutually hurting stalemate on multiple levels (political, social, and military); a drastic change in both the domestic and international contexts; and a faltering economy that promised to make life intolerable for whichever group ultimately prevailed in the struggle.

The section in this chapter covering the mutually hurting stalemate describes the deadly back and forth of the South African security forces and the ANC insurgents and their allies. In 1988, a contributor to the ANC journal *Sechaba* lamented, "we are confronted with conditions in which an absolute victory is impossible."⁹⁵⁸ But this stalemate was locked in place on more than just a military level. Further, as Lodge notes, besides not gaining ground on the battlefield, "neither party could eliminate the other from the political terrain," either.⁹⁵⁹

⁹⁵⁸ A. Mashinini, "People's War and Negotiations: Are they Fire and Water?," *Sechaba*, August 1988.

⁹⁵⁹ Pierre du Toit, "South Africa: In Search of Post-Settlement Peace," in John Darby and Roger MacGinty (eds.), *The Management of Peace Processes*, New York: Palgrave, 2000, p.28.

To understand what tipped the conflict toward negotiation it is crucial to recognize the importance of context. By 1990, the South African government had become increasingly isolated and treated as a pariah in the international community. The apartheid system was collapsing under its own weight and white South Africans began mobilizing against conscription into the security forces. Moreover, the security forces had accrued so much power that numerous covert organizations were no longer beholden to the state. Private companies staffed by ex-commandos were involved in smuggling ivory, hardwood, diamonds, and other products.⁹⁶⁰ Others, like 32 Battalion and C 10, had morphed into death squads.

After decades of discriminatory practices, many whites began to see their own government for what it was—a racist and often brutal tool of repression. This mindset swept through white South Africa and as the conflict dragged on, fewer whites saw joining the security services as a matter of pride. People no longer wanted to risk life and limb for something they were not sure they believed in. From 1976 onward, the police were attacked 485 times, more than a third of all terrorist attacks.

Loss of External Support

The loss of the Soviet Union as an external sponsor caused the ANC to reevaluate its position in South Africa.⁹⁶¹ Without the training, logistics, and financial backing of the USSR, could the insurgency expect to sustain a level of violence sufficient enough to threaten Pretoria? Moreover, the collapse of the world's Communist superpower sewed doubt into those within the ANC leadership that dogmatically promoted the virtue of a centrally planned economy. The

⁹⁶⁰ Ellis, "Third Force," p.276.

⁹⁶¹ Soviet sponsorship of African insurgent movements is explained thoroughly in Richard H. Shultz, Jr., *The Soviet Union and Revolutionary Warfare: Principles, Practices, and Regional Comparisons*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1988, pp.115-148.

distance between Moscow and the ANC accelerated in the fall of 1991 following a power grab by Boris Yeltsin.

The USSR was formally disbanded in December of that year and in February 1992, Andrey Kozyrev, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, established diplomatic relations with the South African government.⁹⁶² According to Lou Picard, “the loss of the sugar daddy for the ANC spelled the beginning of the end. The leadership knew it had to move and move fast.”⁹⁶³ Without the support, both economic and political, of the world’s *other* superpower, the ANC leadership began looking for a way to capitalize on the leverage it still maintained. Negotiations presented the most logical way to accomplish this.

Economic Factors

Increasing economic sanctions against South Africa’s apartheid government placed mounting pressure on the government to begin implementing changes. A fissure emerged between South Africa’s political leadership and the country’s economic elites. The “insurgent counter-elite” were economically subordinate and socially marginalized actors who were able to sustain an insurgency which forced the other side to take notice.⁹⁶⁴

Private investment in South Africa declined steadily over the course of the conflict. Economic elites were able to pressure state elites to the point where the balance of power between moderates and hardliners finally tipped in favor of those desperate to end the conflict

⁹⁶² Shubin, *The Hot “Cold War,”* p.263.

⁹⁶³ Author interview with Dr. Lou Picard, 10 April 2012, Pittsburgh, PA.

⁹⁶⁴ Elisabeth Jean Wood, “An Insurgent Path to Democracy: Popular Mobilization, Economic Interests, and Regime Transition in South Africa and El Salvador,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.34, No.8, October 2001, pp.862-865.

through peaceful means.⁹⁶⁵ The insurgent leadership recognized the change in the balance of power and moved to take advantage. When the ANC negotiating team was promised substantive leadership roles in a post-apartheid government, the dye was cast. “From an economic standpoint, both sides were really hurting,” notes Picard.⁹⁶⁶ Finally, the ANC saw an opportunity to become relevant, both politically and economically. Those on the other side of the negotiating table had it in their best interest for the transition to democracy to be both peaceful and wholesale.

Table 8: African National Congress Analytic Framework Summary Analysis

Operational Tools

Sanctuary	A lack of internal sanctuary was a definitive factor in the ANC’s decision to negotiate. Throughout the conflict, the insurgents attempted to establish a formidable presence within South Africa but were primarily relegated to regional bases. The opportunity to return to South Africa weighed heavily in the decision.
Intelligence	Intelligence played a major role in the negotiations phase of the insurgency. Sensing that the geopolitical situation was changing and apartheid was not sustainable, the ANC’s Department of Intelligence and Security met with its COIN force counterparts to discuss possible details and challenges of a transition.
Training	The ANC lost its Eastern Bloc sponsors after it seemed that negotiations were imminent. Further, by this time, MK special units had already achieved a level of professionalism that were placing significant pressure on the COIN force militarily, thus adding to the group’s growing leverage.

Organizational Tools

Command & Control	By the time of CODESA 2, the ANC’s command and control had become a serious factor in the drive toward peace. ANC chief negotiator Cyril Ramaphosa and his inner circle, including Joe Slovo, Valli Moosa, and Mac Maharaj, had proved themselves far more skilled negotiators than any NP politician.
Group Composition	Nelson Mandela’s ability to emerge from prison and steer the insurgents away from violence was the difference maker in terms of avoiding a return to conflict. Mandela was one of the few figures within the ANC that had the clout to convince MK ideologues that the best chance for power was through peace.
Ideology	The Communist factor ceased to be an important factor after the USSR began to disintegrate in 1989. First, the ANC’s commitment to Communism had always been purposefully overplayed by Pretoria. Second, with the ‘red threat’ no longer an issue, Western countries pressured the NP to end apartheid.
Popular Support	In the battle for “hearts and minds,” history was on the side of the ANC. COIN force repression and insurgent political mobilization were complimented by shifting geopolitical dynamics which had the effect of emboldening the politicians within the group.

⁹⁶⁵ Ibid, p.864.

⁹⁶⁶ Author interview with Dr. Lou Picard, 10 April 2012, Pittsburgh, PA.

Propaganda	ANC propaganda outlets were instrumental in consolidating support for the ANC's transition to politics. This effort accelerated after the group was made legal and the newspapers and magazines no longer had to fear reprisals from the COIN force or government.
<i>Strategic Decision Making</i>	
Goals	The ANC's goals/objectives were conducive to negotiations. Consider, the movement began as a political organization and then adopted militancy as a tactic thereafter. With the tide of history sweeping against apartheid and Pretoria, the ANC capitalized on the timing of negotiations to maximize its political power.
Seminal Events	Incidents like the Sharpeville massacre and the Soweto uprising convinced many within the ANC that negotiations would not be an option. With the development of South Africa's "Third Force" in the later phases of the conflict, MK fighters were bent on revenge, and bloodlust competed with pragmatism.
Previous attempts at conflict resolution	Previous attempts at conflict resolution dissuaded the insurgents from talking to the government. Pretoria was not viewed as credible because from an ANC perspective, the HNG/COIN force was comprised of rogue elements and independent actors that would either sabotage negotiations or act independently.
Mutually hurting stalemate	A mutually hurting stalemate between the COIN forces and insurgents had been recognized by all sides by the mid-1980s. This was a major factor in bringing previously irreconcilable competing interests together to figure out a solution to the ongoing deadlock in South Africa.
Decision-making structure & process	Even though previous attempts at conflict resolution argued against the wisdom of negotiating, the insurgents made the decision to engage in "talks about talks," which did have a decidedly positive impact on the ultimate decision to negotiate an end to the insurgency and renounce violence permanently.

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6.0 CONCLUSION: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CASE STUDIES

Table 9: Comparative Analysis of Operational and Organizational Tools

<i>Overall impact on the decision to negotiate</i>	PIRA	Hizballah	LTTE	ANC
Weapons				
Funding				
Sanctuary				
Intelligence				
Training				
Command & Control				
Group Composition				
Ideology				
Popular Support				
Public Relations/Propaganda				

High

Moderate

Low

6.1 OPERATIONAL TOOLS

6.1.1 H1: Weapons/Ammunition

Overall, research findings offer a moderate level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with limited or antiquated weaponry/ammunition is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces and thus more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” weapons/ammunition is represented by the letter l. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

If insurgents have no access to weapons, or struggle to arm themselves, there is little chance that they can prevail militarily. Effective COIN forces disrupt or prevent insurgents from acquiring weapons. As recent history has proven, weapons as basic as shoulder-fired anti-aircraft weapons can be a great equalizer in an insurgency. Groups like Hizballah that are able to equip themselves like the army of a nation state have a greater ability to neutralize COIN force advantages. This operational tool is straightforward. The better armed and equipped a group is, the greater the chance of battlefield success, making negotiations less likely.

In Northern Ireland, the capture of the weapons-laden ship the *Eksund*, prevented the insurgents from launching their own version of the ‘Tet Offensive’ in a final push to expel British soldiers in 1987. The loss of this shipment of weapons made many high-ranking insurgents seriously consider cutting a deal to end the conflict. Without an influx of weapons, the PIRA realized it would never be able to raise the death toll past an “acceptable level of violence.”

Weapons were among the most important operational tools for both Hizballah and the

LTTE. In all four cases, the insurgents relied on a combination of external sponsors and internal support to meet their weapons needs. In South Africa, the ANC consistently lacked a supply of modern weaponry. To compensate for this shortcoming, Mandela and the group's leadership placed a greater emphasis on building a political infrastructure, which proved a boon to the ANC when it made the transition to government in the early 1990s.

Iranian-supplied weaponry transformed Hizballah into the most formidable non-state actor in the region. Hizballah's weapons supply gives the group a wide-ranging attack capability and versatility in what types of targets it can attack. Furthermore, its weapons have contributed to the group's longevity and sustainment as well as the ability to psychologically impact its adversaries, most notably the Israelis. The group's arsenal has been a stumbling block in discussions over peace negotiations. First, Hizballah's weaponry affords it significant leverage and political clout. The group is still responsible for providing security to southern Lebanon. The issue of disarmament has proved to be intractable in Lebanon. Until an agreement on this front is reached, Hizballah will maintain its army while continuing to sit in parliament. For Hizballah, weaponry has proved to be an obstacle to further negotiations.

In Sri Lanka, the LTTE's access to weapons and ability to innovate allowed the insurgents to achieve parity with government forces in the early stages of the conflict. The Tigers diversified both the types of weapons they used as well as the sources from which they obtained the weapons, hindering government efforts to curb the insurgents resupply. This diversification of sources put the LTTE in touch with numerous other insurgent groups, which in turn linked its members into other 'dark networks'. Finally, the insurgents' superiority in weaponry allowed it to strike the government at will, assassinating politicians and military leaders on the COIN side with regularity. In turn, this provided Prabhakaran with confidence

that the insurgents could defeat the Sri Lankan government militarily. This confidence never wavered, and the LTTE's impressive arsenal and ability to establish sea, air, and land forces in addition to the Black Tigers suicide squad meant that negotiations were not an option, at least as long as the insurgents remained a potent military force within Sri Lanka.

As an operational tool, the availability of or access to weapons was a central factor influencing the trend toward continued conflict. Similarly, when the COIN force was able to restrict the insurgents' ability to resupply itself with weaponry, fighters within the group were thereby convinced that negotiations were the most effective way for the insurgents to achieve their objectives. The refusal to decommission its weapons is one of the last remaining obstacles to seducing Hizballah away from non-state militarism and toward a more comprehensive accommodation within the Lebanese state.

Still, there are very few cases in the history of insurgency where the insurgents do not have access to any weapons. Where their resources are limited or restricted, insurgents will fashion crude or improvised weaponry and explosives to continue the fight. In many conflicts, weapons are stolen from the COIN force, either through raids on weapons depots or taken from dead soldiers in combat. Overall, an insurgency with limited or antiquated weaponry/ammunition is indeed less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces, however, this operational tool only has a moderate influence on the decision of insurgents to negotiate an end to the insurgency.

6.1.2 H2: Sanctuary/Safe Haven

Overall, research findings offer a high level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with limited or no access to sanctuary/safe haven is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on

COIN forces and thus more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6. “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” sanctuary/safe haven is represented by the letter m. This sub-variable is an essential component helping to explain the theory of insurgent negotiation.

Among operational tools, sanctuary (along with training) proved to be one of the most important factors for insurgents. With sanctuary/safe haven, an insurgency can continue indefinitely, especially if the safe haven is impenetrable or unable to be contested by the COIN force.

Sanctuary afforded the PIRA with the ability to rest, recuperate, and plan operations; hide weapons; train; avoid arrest/detection; and finally, recruit, fundraise, and lobby for political support. Without question, PIRA sanctuary in the United States and the Republic of Ireland contributed to the leadership’s intransigence in terms of negotiating an end to the conflict. From an operational perspective, with sanctuaries nearby and abroad, the insurgents could carry on their activities without accounting for the robust British intelligence network.

For the LTTE, sanctuary in India, Canada, and elsewhere served as territory for the insurgents to train and manage logistical tasks. Within Sri Lanka, jungle sanctuary offered room for the LTTE to set up and administer a “state within a state.” It also gave the insurgents the space necessary to build a robust military infrastructure. With these elements in place, the insurgents reached a stage of invulnerability, assuming that any negotiations would inevitably involve the successful secession of the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka leading to an independent Tamil Eelam.

In South Africa, the ANC used sanctuary in order to spread its network, develop a military infrastructure, and galvanize political support among the population. Unlike in Sri Lanka, however, the ANC struggled throughout its existence to establish safe havens within

South Africa proper. Instead, the group maintained a robust external sanctuary in various countries in the region, but never managed to build an internal sanctuary within South Africa to the level it had hoped. This was a COIN force advantage and worked against the insurgents on an operational level. Without an internal safe haven, the ANC's leaders felt pressured to capitalize on negotiations with Pretoria and this can be considered a factor in bringing the group to the negotiating table in the early 1990s.

Sanctuary was less of a factor in Lebanon than in the other three cases analyzed, but Hizballah is also unique in that its primary adversary is not co-located physically. However, in the case of the ANC and the PIRA, a loss of sanctuary was a major factor in moving each group closer toward negotiations, while the LTTE's sanctuary in the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka made its leader less willing to quit the fight. Overall, an insurgency that lacks access to sanctuary or safe haven is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces. Sanctuary/safe haven, along with funding/financing, is one of two operational tools critical to the theory of insurgent negotiation. In sum, this research finds that sanctuary has a significant influence on the decision of insurgents to negotiate an end to the insurgency.

6.1.3 H3: Intelligence

Overall, research findings offer a moderate level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with compromised intelligence is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces and thus more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., "A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation," intelligence is represented by the letter n. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

On both sides of the conflict, insurgency and counterinsurgency, intelligence remains one of the most critical operational tools. Intelligence operatives are involved in each facet of the organization and often have the most intimate view of the adversary.

For the ANC, the focus on intelligence led the group to establish an underground network, conduct surveillance and reconnaissance, infiltrate the COIN force, and integrate members of the political and military wings. During the final stage of the insurgency, the ANC's intelligence network played a leading role in exploratory talks aimed at jumpstarting negotiations.

Hizballah's intelligence apparatus also allowed it to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance on its adversaries (both internal and external) as well as infiltrate the COIN force and master the art of subversion. Moreover, its PSYOP capabilities and operational security are among the most advanced of any insurgent group worldwide. These enhanced capabilities have emboldened its leadership and contributed to an aversion to conciliation.

Intelligence can influence the insurgents in the direction of multiple outcomes. A solid intelligence infrastructure can be an extremely valuable operational tool against an adversary. However, as occurred in South Africa and to a lesser extent in Northern Ireland, intelligence operatives can shepherd the process of negotiations in the initial stages and even remain engaged parties throughout. In Sri Lanka, India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) liaised with LTTE intelligence operatives to broker negotiations between the LTTE and various Sri Lankan government administrations.

In an insurgency, intelligence personnel are on the front lines. An insurgent organization with a compromised intelligence apparatus is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on

COIN forces, although this research finds that as an operational tool, intelligence only had a moderate influence on the decision of insurgents to negotiate an end to the insurgency.

6.1.4 H4: Training/Tacit Knowledge Transfer

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with a restricted ability to train its members and transfer tacit knowledge is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces and thus more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” training/tacit knowledge transfer is represented by the letter o. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

In an insurgency, the counterinsurgents are very often the superior military force. But with the right operational tools, insurgents can be trained to inflict great harm on their adversaries. If training becomes institutionalized, the insurgency can grow in size and lethality, making the chances of negotiating less likely, at least in the near term. Training was among the most important operational tools for the PIRA, Hizballah, and the ANC.

Specialization, lethality, professionalism and image, and networking are just a few of the byproducts from the PIRA’s intense focus on training and tacit knowledge transfer. Undoubtedly, training also played a role in the group’s longevity. Per negotiations, though, training had relatively little effect on the group’s decision to negotiate other than the political training new recruits underwent before becoming a full-fledged member of the organization. To this end, political training and indoctrination radicalized some members whose politics became less about objectives and more about ideology.

Hizballah relied on training to increase its military prowess, enable recruiting, expand its international reach and establish its “train the trainers” program. For Hizballah, the goal of training was to neutralize Israel’s military superiority, but one of the results was to entrench Hizballah further within Lebanese society. Rigorous training increased military capacity which was demonstrated in the eighteen year battle against the Israelis in southern Lebanon and again in 2006 during the thirty-three day war. With increased military success has come a more devoted following, which has grown increasingly more militant and has hardened its stance toward negotiations with Israel, even as it has simultaneously advocated for greater political power within Beirut, greater Lebanon, and the Arab/Islamic world more generally. In the case of Hizballah, training has been an obstacle to negotiations.

For most of its tenure, training for the ANC was merely a matter of survival. Still, MK fighters and ANC activists relied on training as an operational tool to provide ideological support, increase both lethality and optempo, and assist with recruitment. In the end, training was a relatively unimportant factor in the ANC’s decision to negotiate with the South African government, although it was an important factor in the group’s ability to wage an insurgency against the better-trained, better-equipped South African Defense Forces. Reaching the point of a military stalemate with the SADF would not have been possible without the training of MK special forces units.

In Sri Lanka, training failed to rank as one of the LTTE’s three most important operational tools but the importance of training was evident in its ability to conduct a range of operations as well as its elite suicide commando squad, which was responsible for eliminating heads of state, military leaders, and both Sri Lankan and Indian politicians. As the case studies clearly demonstrate, an insurgency with the inability to transfer tacit knowledge and train its

members is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces. Nevertheless, as far as the relationship between training and negotiations, this research finds that as an operational tool, training had a minimal effect on the decision of insurgents to negotiate an end to the insurgency.

6.1.5 H5: Funding/Financing

Overall, research findings offer a high level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with limited funding/financing is less capable of sustaining successful attacks on COIN forces and thus more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” funding/financing is represented by the letter p. This sub-variable is an essential component helping to explain the theory of insurgent negotiation.

Choking off an insurgent group’s funding stream is critical to preventing the insurgents from resupplying and meeting their essential needs. Funding can be provided externally, through state sponsors, diaspora communities, NGOS/charities, or several other avenues. A group can also fund itself internally, through a combination of licit and illicit means. It is important to note that a COIN force or government can be relatively successful in blunting threat finance and an insurgent group can still plan and execute spectacular attacks. Operations are cheap. Still, once a group grows in size and sophistication to the level of a Hizballah or LTTE, just sustaining the everyday functions of such a large organization requires a large and consistent operating budget.

In Northern Ireland, the group’s finances covered the salaries of full-time fighters, acquired weapons and munitions from international sources, financed the planning and preparation of operations, and sustained the families of imprisoned fighters. Toward the end of the conflict, funding was instrumental in the group’s decision to negotiate, as money that was

previously used to grow its military wing was diverted to building up the PIRA's political wing, Sinn Fein.

The LTTE, on the other hand, retained the majority of its funding almost exclusively for military means. Funding provided the group with seed money for its licit businesses, which would then help launder the proceeds it obtained through organized crime. In turn, these profits, as well as the millions of dollars donated to the LTTE from the diaspora community, went into building the insurgents' military capabilities, including the development of a world-class maritime capability. Only toward the end of the conflict was the Sri Lankan government successful in clamping down on LTTE financing. By this time, however, negotiations were no longer an option and the insurgents were summarily defeated in 2009.

Without the funding provided to Hizballah by the Iranians, the insurgent group would not be able to sustain its broad social services network throughout southern Lebanon. These services are a major reason for Hizballah's popular support in the country. Overall, funding has been a factor in the group's refusal to disarm and negotiate a peaceful transition away from armed conflict.

With the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the African National Congress lost its primary source of external support. No longer able to rely on the Russians for training and other forms of support, the ANC consolidated its resources around devising a political solution to the conflict in South Africa. Entering the third decade of its insurgency against the apartheid government in South Africa, the ANC was suffering economically. In the townships, Black Africans were far poorer than their white counterparts, meaning the insurgents' domestic base of support had little to contribute financially. The prospects of reversing the economic fortune of its constituency proved too enticing for the ANC

to ignore. Along with sanctuary/safe haven, the operational tool funding/financing is one of two critical variables to the contribution of operational tools in the theory of insurgent negotiation. In other words, this research finds that funding/financing has a significant influence on the decision of insurgents to negotiate an end to the insurgency.

6.2 ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

6.2.1 H6: Command & Control

Overall, research findings offer a moderate level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with a compromised command & control structure will be unable to sustain its existence as a cohesive entity and will therefore be more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” command & control is represented by the letter q. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

Command & control, or C², is one of the most important insurgent organizational tools. How a group is structured influences both the leadership of the insurgency as well as the way decisions and policies are reached and implemented. The leadership provides strategic direction to the movement, issuing directives and shaping major decisions that affect every aspect of the organization.

In Lebanon, following long periods of protracted warfare, all sides to the conflict are understandably reluctant to disarm or demobilize. This has been a continuous problem for the

government in Beirut, where Hizballah brazenly flaunts its refusal to abide by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1559, which calls for the group to disarm. Hizballah commonly cites the Israeli threat as its primary reason for retaining its militia forces. Since the government in Beirut does not maintain a monopoly on the use of violence, it remains illegitimate in the eyes of some Lebanese and many in the international community. Hizballah's decision to enter into the domestic political scene while maintaining a defensive posture with offensive capabilities is a decision influenced by its command and control structure.

Lessons from Northern Ireland prove instructive here, as the peace process was pursued in tandem with, or parallel to, disarmament. In Lebanon, it has always been argued that disarmament should be a pre-requisite to legitimizing the group as a political party and dropping its designation as a terrorist/insurgent group.

In Sri Lanka, Prabhakaran's refusal to neuter the LTTE was the product of thirty plus years of continuous conflict against an array of foes—Sinhalese, fellow Tamil groups, and Indian 'occupation forces.' The top-down nature of the organization prevented dissent. Consultation, cooperation, and commiseration between the LTTE's top echelons were far less common than they were in the PIRA, the ANC, or Hizballah.

The Provisional IRA favored a vertical structure initially before switching to a more networked structure to counter British infiltration of the organization. Still, especially within Sinn Fein, policies were enacted through a more hierarchical approach. When the group's political wing ascended its military wing in power, the fact that Sinn Fein was more vertically structured than the militants actually enabled the negotiation process. Once the decision to make this shift was made, Sinn Fein activists led the charge in carrying out Adams' orders.

Similar to the situation in Northern Ireland, the insurgency in South Africa integrated the

External Coordinating Council (ECC) with the Politico-Military Council, which emerged as one of two coordinating bodies with the executive power to make decisions. On a more local level, the creation of a Politico-Military Council to replace the Revolutionary Council signaled the organization's intent to move toward politics.

Command and control is undoubtedly a major factor in whether or not insurgents are able to sustain their existence as a cohesive entity, but this research finds that this was not a significant factor in pushing insurgents toward negotiating an end to the insurgency.

6.2.2 H7: Group Composition

*Overall, research findings offer a high level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with a heterogeneous group composition, particularly one comprised of a significant number of politicians, will be unable to sustain its existence as a cohesive entity and will therefore be more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., "A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation," group composition is represented by the letter *r*. This sub-variable is considered an essential component of explaining the theory of insurgent negotiation.*

Cynthia Irvin's theory of group composition suggests a model of revolutionary nationalist politics that integrates several variables, including: institutions, individual motivations, and ideology. Group composition was one of the most important factors in the trend toward or away from negotiations. This proved especially true when the group's overall leader was an exemplary case of a distinct prototype. In the case of Sri Lanka, Prabhakaran is an example of the most extreme form of ideologue. As long as he maintained control of the group, the LTTE was never going to seriously entertain negotiating an end to the conflict that did not result with

LTTE-controlled areas seceding from Sri Lanka.

Provisional IRA leader Gerry Adams recognized that the offer of political legitimacy during negotiations with Protestant politicians and British government leaders was the best opportunity for the Catholic population in Northern Ireland to achieve an outcome of peace and prosperity. His transformation from a young ideologue to a radical after his years in prison set the tone for the PIRA's armed struggle and ultimate transformation into a political force in Northern Ireland. The PIRA had to shelve its objective of establishing a united Ireland, but in return the insurgency's leaders were granted a stake in a power-sharing government.

Similarly, in both South Africa and Lebanon, the insurgents agreed to stop fighting in exchange for the chance to take part in the legitimate government of their respective countries. These decisions were driven, in no small part, by the respective leaders of the groups, Nelson Mandela and Hassan Nasrallah.

For the Tamils of Sri Lanka, however, there would be no negotiations, due largely to the ego and relentlessness of the LTTE's leader, Prabhakaran. For Prabhakaran, negotiations equaled surrender and were only used to prolong the insurgency. Unflinching in his goals, Prabhakaran missed several openings to use political negotiations to secure significant concessions for the Tamils, but his insistence that the group continue fighting led to the group's defeat at the hands of the government. In retrospect, the Sri Lankan COIN force should have placed a higher premium on following a decapitation strategy against the insurgents. Had a more earnest effort to kill Prabhakaran succeeded, it is unlikely that his successor would have been equally as opposed to a negotiated settlement, meaning the insurgency could possibly have been ended with the government spending far less treasure and spilling far less blood.

While it is notoriously difficult to accurately decipher the group composition of an insurgency, group composition is an essential factor in helping insurgents sustain their existence as a cohesive entity. As a whole, this research finds that group composition was one of two critical organizational tools helping to determine the theory of insurgent negotiation.

6.2.3 H8: Ideology

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with a rigid ideology will be unable to sustain its existence as a cohesive entity and will therefore be more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” ideology is represented by the letter s. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

Ideologies are crucial for insurgent groups because they translate the group’s message to its followers and articulate a platform to resolve grievances. Ideologies can also affect a group’s willingness to negotiate. The more ideologically rigid a group is, the less willing it is to compromise on the fundamental tenets or principles of its beliefs than a group that is more ideologically flexible, or pragmatic.

Of the four groups studied in this dissertation, the PIRA and Hizballah proved to be the most ideologically flexible. The PIRA toned down its nationalist rhetoric during the negotiation process while Hizballah admitted publicly that its desire to establish an Islamic state within Lebanon was unrealistic and therefore not worth pursuing, at least in the short-term.

The LTTE proved to be the most ideologically rigid of the groups studied, insisting on an independent Tamil state, although in 2001 the group announced its willingness to explore

political devolution measures that safeguarded Tamil rights in a “united” Sri Lanka, although skeptics are highly dubious of Prabhakaran’s sincerity to abide by this agreement.

For the African National Congress, the most important strands of the group’s ideology included nationalism, black consciousness, and communism, probably in that order. Once it was determined that communism was never an overarching goal of the insurgents, the political situation in South Africa during the end of apartheid reflected favorably on the ANC’s other cohesive elements, nationalism and black consciousness.

Insurgent groups tend to be more ideologically rigid in the first stages of their existence. Over time, thinking evolves and battlefield experiences teach lessons that textbooks are unable impart. Being able to positively identify the tenets of an insurgent group’s ideology is essential to negotiating with the group. Unless COIN forces have a clear indication of what makes the insurgents tick, there will be little chance that any carrots involved will have the desired effect of drawing combatants away from the fight.

While ideology is a factor a major factor in whether or not insurgents are able to sustain their existence as a cohesive entity, this research finds that in the overall scheme of why insurgents negotiate, it does not play as significant a role as initially hypothesized.

6.2.4 H9: Popular Support

Overall, research findings offer a high level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with low levels and/or changing levels of popular support will be unable to sustain its existence as a cohesive entity and will therefore be more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” popular support is represented by the letter

t. This sub-variable is considered an essential component of explaining the theory of insurgent negotiation.

The case studies demonstrate the importance of maintaining the good will of the population, not from an altruistic perspective, but from a pragmatic standpoint. Popular support is also critical when considering the translation of passive support into more active forms, including recruitment into an organization.

The issue of leverage is not always easy to delineate. Throughout the course of an insurgency, different factions may have leverage at different points. Since insurgency is not static, the power position is liable to change multiple times. In Lebanon, Hizballah has negotiated from a position of leverage throughout most of its lifespan. It maintains high levels of popular support, political legitimacy, and the backing of a regional power that provides the group with funding and arms. When it has negotiated, it has largely done so on its own terms.

Throughout its three-decade long insurgency, the PIRA maintained relatively high levels of popular support among the working-class Irish Catholic communities of West Belfast and Derry, as well as extensive popular support in the Republic of Ireland and among Irish Americans in the United States. It was this latter group, however, that played a key role in convincing the PIRA to negotiate an end to the insurgency. By the 1990s, influential Irish Americans began to pressure Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams to accept the British offer of political legitimacy in exchange for a promise to cease the armed struggle. While numerous factors contributed to this gradual ‘about-face,’ the important thing to realize is that an influential

constituency which had always been a source of PIRA popular support was able to affect the insurgent leadership's decisionmaking calculus and open doors that would demonstrate tangible benefits.

The ANC's popular support grew over the course of the conflict in South Africa and largely resulted from several variables: the ANC's comprehensive political message and appeal for reform; heavy-handed and clumsy policies implemented by the Afrikaner government in Pretoria; and a growing momentum that brought about real geopolitical change both within South Africa and within the international community. Following the legalization of the ANC in 1990, the groundswell of popular support for the group was evident in its election of Nelson Mandela as the first president of the post-apartheid government.

For the most part, the LTTE maintained high levels of popular support, with the exception of the final phase of the conflict. Following the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, the LTTE came to be viewed more as a predator and less as a protector. By this stage in the conflict, LTTE funding was restricted, and the insurgents turned on their own people for materiel support. Internal support had always been forthcoming throughout the conflict, but when the Tigers relied on extortion to extract scant resources from a vulnerable population, many Tamils were turned off. Following Karuna's defection that same year, the LTTE lost a significant portion of its popular support base, which sapped its legitimacy and convinced the Sri Lankan government that one final push could defeat the insurgency once and for all.

When an insurgency loses popular support, the trend indicates that negotiation is more likely (or military defeat, as in the case of the LTTE). Therefore, maintaining the good will of the population is critical. To be sure, the population in an insurgency should be considered the center of gravity. The push and pull over the loyalty of a certain constituency can mean the

difference between survival and demise. Moreover, predatory actions and collateral damage risk provoking backlash from the population. Overall, popular support had a central impact on the existence of an insurgent organization as a cohesive entity. Accordingly, this organizational tool formed part of the theory of insurgent negotiation, demonstrating that the willingness of insurgents to negotiate or continue fighting was directly affected by the level and nature of popular support.

6.2.5 H10: Public Relations/Propaganda

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for the hypothesis that an insurgency with a weak public relations/propaganda capability will be unable to sustain its existence as a cohesive entity and will therefore be more likely to negotiate an end to the insurgency. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” public relations/propaganda is represented by the letter u. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

Media and public relations efforts are important tools in winning the battle of perception. This type of organizational tool can help insurgent organizations recruit, fundraise, and develop a coherent political platform, thus prolonging the conflict. But also, as in Northern Ireland and South Africa, the media wing of a group can serve to win over supporters to a decision to enter negotiations. Propaganda, even with its pejorative connotation, can play a positive role in ending conflict by positioning a group prior to making a decision as well as justifying and rallying supporters to that decision once it has been made.

In Lebanon, public relations/propaganda has played a more divisive and provocative role.

Rather than using its media capabilities to engage the Israelis and find common ground, *Al-Manar* is at the forefront of villainizing both the IDF and the Israeli public, thus ensuring that prospects for negotiations are unlikely any time soon. Following the July 2006 war, Hizballah used its media wing to justify its decision to begin a conflagration with Israel by kidnapping its soldiers. Still, as history has demonstrated in Northern Ireland and South Africa, if the Party of God's leadership decides that a more permanent détente with Israel is a wise policy, the group's political support/propaganda arm will likely play a central role in expressing this dynamic both to the Israelis as well as to its support base within Lebanon.

The LTTE's use of propaganda consisted of television, radio, and print communications that directed its message to various segments of the Tamil diaspora (those that would contribute money to the group) and politicians and human-rights activists who might be able to influence the situation from a diplomatic or political perspective. Similar to Hizballah, the LTTE was extremely effective in highlighting its role as the victim. This allowed the group to receive significant support in various political arenas. However, because of continued human rights violations by members, and Prabhakaran's failure to offer a more coherent narrative, the group's public relations assets had little positive effect on securing concessions which could be translated into tangible gains for the LTTE. Overall, while public relations/propaganda assisted insurgents in sustaining their existence as a cohesive entity, this research finds that its role as a variable with explanatory power is lacking, and it therefore did not form a part of the theory of insurgent negotiation.

6.3 CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

6.3.1 Goals/Objectives

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for goals/objectives as a condition variable (contextual factor) with significant impact on the theory of insurgent negotiation. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” goals/objectives is represented by the letter v.

Sometimes insurgencies end because the groups achieve their goals. However, insurgent groups typically espouse a number of objectives and achieving all of these objectives is rare. Moreover, throughout the course of an insurgency, goals change, strategies shift, and objectives are modified. Sometimes new leaders ascend to the helm and change the direction of the organization. Depending on what kind of ideology a group adheres to, how the group is structured, and what kind of decisionmaking process it follows, the achievement of or the failure to reach an organization's goals do not always lead them to end their struggle.

Simply put, no group studied in this dissertation achieved all of its goals. Yet, two groups negotiated outright (PIRA, ANC), while another group negotiated an internal end to its insurgency (Hizballah) and the last group negotiated at various times throughout its three decades fighting the government (LTTE). For the PIRA and the ANC, negotiating an end to their respective insurgencies did not mean abandoning their goals. Rather, both groups used the negotiation process to gain political legitimacy. Hizballah did the same. After existing on the far end of the political spectrum, three of the four groups analyzed considered political legitimacy so important that they were willing to abandon violence to acquire it—although

Hizballah should still be considered an active insurgent group.

Sri Lanka's attempts to bring an end to the conflict with the Tamil Tigers were continuously undermined by the recalcitrance of the LTTE's leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. On the battlefield, and off—leadership matters. Prabhakaran's insistence on the possibility of securing victory through military force meant that Colombo's attempts to negotiate an end to the insurgency were doomed to futility. Prabhakaran sincerely believed that the only route to achieving the group's goals was through violence. Therefore, any legitimacy gained through the political process that did not result in independence for the Tamils was not worthy of pursuance.

6.3.2 Seminal Events

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for seminal events as a condition variable (contextual factor) with significant impact on the theory of insurgent negotiation. In the section 6.3.6., "A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation," seminal events is represented by the letter w.

Seminal events can define an insurgency, for better or worse. Some can have the effect of tipping a conflict further toward violence, while others can have a mitigating effect, essentially providing a respite in conflict for cooler heads to prevail and for politics to trump force.

Each of the four insurgencies featured a seminal event that tipped an already simmering confrontation further toward all-out war. In Northern Ireland, the "Bloody Sunday" killings of 13 unarmed civilians mobilized the Catholic population and drove hundreds of recruits to join the PIRA. In Lebanon, Israel's 1982 invasion of the country to drive out PLO militants resulted in an eighteen-year occupation of the southern part of the country and was immortalized in Hizballah lore as the group's primary reason for resistance. For the LTTE, the "Black July" riots

of 1983 tipped low-intensity conflict toward a far more violent confrontation in Sri Lanka. And finally, the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa accelerated racial violence between the majority black population and the minority white Afrikaner population, providing the spark to a racial and ethnic powder keg ready to explode.

6.3.3 Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for previous attempts at conflict resolution as a condition variable (contextual factor) with significant impact on the theory of insurgent negotiation. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” previous attempts at conflict resolution is represented by the letter x.

Just as seminal events can tip a conflict toward or away from violence, so too can attempts at conflict resolution have a similar impact. Negotiations usually play out over the course of years, even spanning decades in many cases. Perceived slights or bad faith negotiations can have a deleterious effect on future negotiations.

The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement was a deal brokered between the British and Irish (ROI) governments that granted Dublin rights of consultation on all aspects of the British government’s Northern Ireland policy. At this point, PIRA leader Gerry Adams realized that the treaty essentially institutionalized a formal role for the Irish government in the political future of Northern Ireland. Toward this end, Adams began shifting resources from the Army to Sinn Fein so that when the time for negotiations arrived, which now seemed imminent, the insurgents would be well placed to take advantage of British concessions and the opportunity to secure political legitimacy within Northern Ireland.

For Hizballah, the Taif Accords that ended the Lebanese Civil War were somewhat anti-climactic. On one hand, Hizballah had used the civil war to solidify its role as a potent military force within the country. On the other hand, because of its policy of staying out of politics prior to 1992, the insurgents were unable to reap serious benefits from the divvying up of political spoils during Taif. One of the main reasons that Hizballah entered the Lebanese government was in order to represent the grievances of the Shia community in southern Beirut and south Lebanon. Once Israeli troops withdrew from Lebanon, Hizballah's primary grievance was removed. Although it moved into politics beginning in 1992, this process was accelerated following the Israeli withdrawal in 2000.

As I documented in the section on the Norwegian-mediated peace process, the prospects of an end to the violence were soon dashed with a change in Sri Lankan government administrations and a change in LTTE demands that led both sides back into a spiral of ethnic outbidding. Because of so many previous false starts, successive Sri Lankan administrations no longer gave the insurgents the benefit of the doubt. Unlike the PIRA and the ANC, groups that were able to capitalize on increased leverage at the right time for maximum effect, the LTTE "overplayed its hand," and as a result, paid the ultimate price.

In 1989, the Harare Declaration laid out the terms of the ANC's willingness to negotiate with Pretoria if certain conditions could be met. Unlike the South African government, the ANC had always proved a reliable partner in negotiations, so the Harare Declaration was only further reinforcement of that fact. While distrust and enmity had characterized earlier attempts to explore the topic of negotiations between the two adversaries, a burgeoning relationship of trust and mutual respect had blossomed between Mandela and F.W. De Klerk. Harare set both sides on the path to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

6.3.4 Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS)

Overall, research findings offer a high level of support for the mutually hurting stalemate as a condition variable (contextual factor) with significant impact on the theory of insurgent negotiation. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” MHS is represented by the letter y. As stated above, as a condition variable, the mutually hurting stalemate governs the magnitude of the impact the IVs (operational tools, organizational tools) have on the DV (the decision insurgents make of whether or not to negotiate) and thus contributes to our understanding of the conditions under which negotiations take place.

Zartman’s concept of a mutually hurting stalemate (MHS) was a contributing factor in each of the four insurgencies examined throughout this dissertation. The presence of a MHS was an important reason for negotiations in Northern Ireland and South Africa, while the absence of a MHS was critical to the insurgents’ refusal to negotiate in Lebanon and Sri Lanka.

In both Northern Ireland and South Africa, the COIN force and the insurgents reached a point in the conflict where both sides were hurting militarily and neither side had the potential to escalate their side to victory. The Provisional Irish Republican Army fought for thirty years against Protestant paramilitary groups and the British Army. Even though the insurgents were infiltrated at some of the highest levels of their organization, the PIRA maintained the capacity to wage war—training, sanctuary, and funding all played a significant role in the group’s longevity. With no clear winner and neither side able to escalate to victory, the conflict became ripe for resolution.

Throughout the ANC/MK insurgency against the South African apartheid regime, the insurgency grew in strength and numbers as the conflict progressed. Even though the COIN force was far superior from a military standpoint, the insurgents relied on guerilla warfare and subversion to lock Pretoria's security forces into a stalemate. Once the government realized that this deadlock could not be overcome, even some of the more ardent hawks within the security forces realized that negotiation was the only way for the minority government to maximize its power in a future government dominated by South Africa's black majority.

The lack of a mutually hurting stalemate in Lebanon is one of the main reasons why Hizballah never officially ended its insurgency. Indeed, it remains a well-armed terrorist group with a political wing active in the Lebanese parliament. The Israelis withdrew in 2000 and the Syrians followed in 2005. The Lebanese state, particularly the Lebanese Armed Forces, lack the force to compel Hizballah to disarm. In fact, the LAF remains divided along sectarian lines and militarily and at present remain unable to project power throughout the whole of the country. As a default, Hizballah has been allowed to keep its militia intact, since Beirut recognizes the role it plays with regard to Lebanese internal security.

Similarly, the lack of a mutually hurting stalemate in Sri Lanka was a major reason why the insurgents never agreed to peace. Ironically, it was negotiations themselves and a feigned interest in ending political violence that allowed the LTTE to avoid reaching the state of a mutually hurting stalemate. This was especially true of the 2001 cease-fire, when the LTTE declared a unilateral cessation to the violence. Alas, like its apparent attempts to make peace in 1985, 1989, and 1994, this temporary halt in the fighting was merely a ruse intended to allow the Tigers to regroup following the heavy casualties suffered by the LTTE in its 2000 and 2001 campaigns.

6.3.5 Decisionmaking Structure & Process

Overall, research findings offer a low level of support for decisionmaking structure & process as a condition variable (contextual factor) with significant impact on the theory of insurgent negotiation. In the section 6.3.6., “A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation,” decisionmaking structure & process is represented by the letter z. This sub-variable is not considered to have explanatory value in the theory of insurgent negotiation.

A subsection of strategic decisionmaking is the structure and process that insurgents work within to make decisions of major import. The organizational tools of insurgent groups, particularly issues of group composition and command and control, factor into this element of decisionmaking,.

The PIRA’s Army Council remained the ultimate arbiter of major decisions throughout the conflict and shaped the decision to commit to the 1994 cease-fire. The cease-fire was an explicit acknowledgement of the MHS between the insurgents and COIN force and gave the politicos within the group the opening to work through the details of the Belfast Agreement.

Hizballah’s decisionmaking structure and process has been heavily influenced by both Syria and Iran from its very inception. The power dynamics between Hizballah and its two primary patrons have changed drastically over the years. This change has accelerated even more rapidly with the advent of the 2011 Arab Spring movement and subsequent insurgency in Syria. At present, Hizballah’s Lebanese leadership, headed by Hassan Nasrallah, probably retains more autonomy than at any time in the group’s history. This has led to more pragmatic decisions, on the whole, but as evidenced by the 2006 July war against Israel, the group is still prone to

miscalculating the repercussions of some of its actions.

The downfall of the LTTE was due in no small part to poor decision-making on the part of the insurgents in the final phase of the conflict. Following the defection of Karuna and the clampdown of LTTE funding after 9/11, the Tigers began to recruit child soldiers and forcibly extort their fellow Tamils in order to maintain their troop level while simultaneously continuing to fill their coffers. By and large, these decisions contributed to a loss of popular support for the LTTE.

In South Africa, the insurgents' decision to engage the government in "talks about talks," coupled with a unilateral declaration to negotiate in good faith, helped the ANC position itself as the party most capable of leading post-apartheid South Africa. Indeed, while some rogue "Third Force" operators attempted to sabotage the peace process, the "talks about talks" were an effective strategy to capitalize on the "ripe moment" which resulted from a MHS and the end of the Cold War.

6.3.6 A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation

In figure 16 below, the theory of insurgent negotiation postulates that where operational tools (A), as represented by sanctuary/safe haven (m) and funding/financing (p), in combination with organizational tools (B), as represented by group composition (r) and popular support (t), and considered in conjunction with a mutually hurting stalemate (y), leads to the decision to negotiate (C).

$$A \rightarrow m \rightarrow p \rightarrow B \rightarrow r \rightarrow t \rightarrow C$$

X

y

Figure 16: A Theory of Insurgent Negotiation

Figure 16 displays the theory's independent variables (A and B), intervening sub-variables (m, p, r, and t), and the dependent variable (C), which comprise the theory's explanation. The proposal " $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ " is the theory's prime hypothesis, while the proposals that " $A \rightarrow m$," " $m \rightarrow p$," " $B \rightarrow r$," and " $r \rightarrow t$," are its explanatory hypotheses. To this, I add the condition variable "y," which represents the mutually hurting stalemate and is indicated by using the multiplication symbol "X" to show that the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable is magnified by the presence of "y" and reduced when "y" is not present.

The study considered the relative importance of five separate operational tools on the decision of insurgents to negotiate, where A= operational tools, l= weapons, m= sanctuary, n= intelligence, o= training, p= funding, and C= decision to negotiate/continue fighting:

$$A \rightarrow l \rightarrow m \rightarrow n \rightarrow o \rightarrow p \rightarrow C$$

Figure 17: Research Hypothesis 1

After analyzing the four historical case studies in sections two through five, the following explanatory hypothesis, one of two intermediate hypotheses that constitutes the theory's explanation, appears in Figure 18 below.

$$A \rightarrow l \rightarrow m \rightarrow n \rightarrow o \rightarrow p \rightarrow C$$

Figure 18: Explanatory Hypothesis 1

Explanatory hypothesis one shows that the tools most important for insurgents to maintain their ability to sustain attacks, sanctuary (m) and funding (p), are critical to helping explain why insurgents negotiate. The study also considered the relative importance of five separate organizational tools on the decision of insurgents to negotiate, where B= organizational tools, q= command & control, r= group composition, s= ideology, t= popular support, u= public relations/PR, and C= decision to negotiate/continue fighting:

$$B \rightarrow q \rightarrow r \rightarrow s \rightarrow t \rightarrow u \rightarrow C$$

Figure 19: Research Hypothesis 2

After analyzing the four historical case studies in sections two through five, the following explanatory hypothesis - one of two intermediate hypotheses - that constitutes the theory's explanation, appears in Figure 20 below.

$$B \rightarrow q \rightarrow r \rightarrow s \rightarrow t \rightarrow u \rightarrow C$$

Figure 20: Explanatory Hypothesis 2

Explanatory hypothesis two shows that the tools most important for insurgents to sustain their existence as a cohesive entity, group composition (r) and popular support (t), are critical to helping explain why insurgents negotiate.

Finally, this study considered the relative importance of five condition variables/contextual factors on the decision to negotiate, represented by v= goals/objectives, w= seminal events, x= previous attempts at conflict resolution, y= MHS, and z= decision-making structure & process. Of the five condition variables considered, only the mutually hurting stalemate (y), was found to frame the antecedent condition. This completes the theory of insurgent negotiation, which appears earlier in figure 16, but is displayed once again below for further edification.

A → l → m → n → o → p → B → q → r → s → t → u → C

X⁹⁶⁷

y

⁹⁶⁷ Note that this is a capital “X,” which represents a multiplication symbol and should not be confused with a lower case “x,” which represents the sub-variable previous attempts at conflict resolution.

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7.0 NEGOTIATIONS AND THE AFGHAN INSURGENCY

With a drawdown of US forces in Iraq underway and the killing of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan in May 2011, the Obama administration has concentrated its efforts on devising an endgame for Afghanistan. The terminal phase of the conflict will entail a shift from the current counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy to a focus on stability operations, including practical end-state objectives within Afghanistan, to include *reconciliation with and reintegration of* elements of the insurgency.⁹⁶⁸ Of the major insurgent groups opposing the Afghan government, none is more important than the Afghan Taliban.⁹⁶⁹ Afghan President Hamid Karzai has correctly recognized that as ethnic Pashtuns, the Taliban is an inseparable part of Afghanistan's national DNA. To bring an end to the insurgency, Taliban fighters must be reintegrated into Afghan society and their representatives included in any future government.⁹⁷⁰ Exactly how, and under what circumstances insurgents make the transition to ex-combatants holds far-reaching implications for the stability of the Afghan state and the prospects for continued violence

⁹⁶⁸ For definitions and the major differences between reintegration and reconciliation, see Mark E. Johnson, "Reintegration and Reconciliation in Afghanistan: Time to End the Conflict," *Military Review*, November/December, 2010, p.97.

⁹⁶⁹ In addition to the Taliban, a panoply of insurgent groups operate in the AFPAK theatre: Haqqani Network, HIG, TTP, LeT, etc.

⁹⁷⁰ Karen DeYoung, Peter Finn, and Craig Whitlock, "Taliban in Talks with Karzai Government," *Washington Post*, October 6, 2010.

following the withdrawal of foreign troops. It remains to be seen whether the Taliban is willing to integrate into an Afghan government with a dominant non-Pashtun element.

Karzai's public statements occasionally refer to the Taliban as "sons of the soil," in an effort to convince the world that the Taliban are a fact of life when envisioning the future of Afghanistan. Despite the proliferation of recent studies calling for a negotiated peace in Afghanistan, history tells us that while success may require negotiation, negotiations in and of themselves do not equal success.⁹⁷¹ In his analysis of negotiating with insurgent groups, Byman points out several of the dangers inherent in inviting a group like the Taliban into a power-sharing arrangement."⁹⁷² Because of their organizational skills, propensity to intimidate locals and genuine popularity in parts of the country, the possibility exists that the Taliban could be victorious in future elections.

In January 2012, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta outlined the most pressing threats facing the United States—terrorism, Iran, North Korea, nuclear proliferation, cyberwar, and the threat of a rising China.⁹⁷³ He also notes that before the United States can turn its full attention to these threats, it needs to resolve the smoldering insurgency in Afghanistan. According to Sean Maloney, "It is possible that successful negotiations with Mullah Omar's Taliban faction would have some effect, but we must confront the possibility that that window of opportunity is now closed and that we are up against something new."⁹⁷⁴ We are not there just yet. Negotiating

⁹⁷¹ Among some of the most important studies on a negotiated peace in Afghanistan are Matt Waldman, "Dangerous Liaisons with the Afghan Taliban: The Feasibility and Risks of Negotiation," United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Report #256, October 2010; Thomas Ruttig, "The Battle for Afghanistan: Negotiations with the Taliban," New America Foundation, Washington D.C.: May 2011; Michael Semple, *Reconciliation in Afghanistan*, Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2009.

⁹⁷² Daniel Byman, "Talking with Insurgents: A Guide for the Perplexed," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.32, Iss.2, April 2009, p.136.

⁹⁷³ <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=66977>

⁹⁷⁴ Sean M. Maloney, "Can We Negotiate with the Taliban?," *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.21, No.2, June 2012, p.408.

with the Taliban is still an option, but unlike a decade ago, it now seems the only plausible scenario for bringing the war in Afghanistan to an end and establishing a modicum of stability in a country perpetually in conflict.

7.1 BRIEF HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The Taliban first emerged in Kandahar province in 1994 as a vigilante group comprised of *madrassa* students, or Talibs. Unlike the Northern Alliance or the various militias led by former *mujahedin* turned warlords, Taliban fighters were “students,” or “seekers,” to use the religious connotation.⁹⁷⁵ Led by Mullah Mohammed Omar, this group of religious students initially rose to prominence after providing security to local Afghans being preyed upon by warlords and militia commanders. In the spring of 1994, the Taliban freed two young girls who had been kidnapped and abused by a militia commander in Singesar. The commander was killed and hung from the barrel of a tank as an example to others. Later that year, the Taliban rescued a young boy whom two local commanders were fighting over—in order to determine who would get to sodomize him.⁹⁷⁶ By 1996, the Taliban controlled the southern Pashtun heartland of Afghanistan, as well as Herat and Kabul.⁹⁷⁷

It is important to note however, that *Taliban* is far from a monolithic entity. Indeed, there

⁹⁷⁵ Stephen Tanner, *Afghanistan: A Military History from Alexander the Great to the War Against the Taliban*, revised edition, Philadelphia, PA: De Capo Press, 2009, p.279.

⁹⁷⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001, p.25.

⁹⁷⁷ Daniel P. Sullivan, “Tinder, Spark, Oxygen, and Fuel: The Mysterious Rise of the Taliban, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.44, No.1, January 2007, p.96.

are many differences to be cognizant of—Afghan versus Pakistani Taliban, ‘old’ Taliban versus ‘neo-Taliban,’ and stark divisions within the Taliban itself, between Durrani and Ghilzai Pashtuns.⁹⁷⁸ Throughout this chapter, I use the terms Taliban, Afghan Taliban, “neo-Taliban,” and Quetta Shura Taliban (QST) to refer to the same group, led by Mullah Mohammad Omar.

7.1.1 Operating Logic

Taliban insurgents who fight against US and ISAF troops in 2012 are motivated by a different set of factors than the group of young *madrassa* students that initially comprised the movement in the mid-1990s. Then, the Taliban was primarily motivated by the desire to establish an ideal Islamic state governed by *sharia* law. After all, the Taliban’s ranks were made up of young Afghans who grew up in the refugee camps of Pakistan, displaced from the fighting of the Soviet-Afghan War. Today, the Taliban fight first and foremost to expel foreign troops from Afghan soil. Following ten years of fighting against Coalition forces, the Taliban has been seriously degraded. Estimates put the number of insurgents somewhere between 60,000 and 70,000, of which approximately 15,000 insurgents are full-time fighters.⁹⁷⁹ American airpower, ISAF counterinsurgency warfare, and special operations night-raids have damaged the organization and caused it to disperse throughout Afghanistan and across the border in Pakistan. However, this is the same group that claims membership in the *mujahedin* that drove the Soviets out of Afghanistan in the late 1980s. Despite suffering major losses, elements of the insurgency

⁹⁷⁸ For more on the differences between ‘old’ Taliban and ‘neo-Taliban,’ see Antonio Giustozzi ed., *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. On meaningful differences between Durrani and Ghilzai Pashtuns, see Thomas Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010, pp.285-336.

⁹⁷⁹ Giustozzi, “Negotiating with the Taliban,” p.4.

remain confident that if its fighters are able to muddle along, the Taliban can survive until US troops are withdrawn from Afghanistan. This could potentially set the stage for a return to violence and yet another Afghan civil war.

7.1.2 Type of Insurgency

Exactly what type of insurgency the Taliban is waging in Afghanistan in 2012 is still a matter of debate. While some would term the conflict an example of a “local-global” insurgency, because of the Taliban’s links to Al-Qaida (which is now acknowledged to be quite limited, at least within Afghanistan proper), others, like Peter Dahl Thruelsen, would argue that the Taliban is a localized insurgency with a local objective. Perhaps the most accurate characterization would be a “local-regional” insurgency encompassing various parts of South Asia. The majority of the Taliban’s military operations are conducted by insurgents operating within their home provinces.⁹⁸⁰ Still, the influence of Siraj Haqqani and his links to both Al-Qaida and the Tehrik-i-Taliban (TTP), or Pakistani Taliban, indicate that as the conflict continues, the Afghan Taliban could be influenced by actors with more regional and even global ambitions.⁹⁸¹ Thomas Ruttig believes that the current U.S. strategy of degrading the Taliban to force it to the negotiating table is having unintended effects. The most serious of these is contributing to the rise of younger,

⁹⁸⁰ Christia and Semple, “Flipping the Taliban,” p.41.

⁹⁸¹ Shezhad H. Qazi, “Rebels of the Frontier: Origins, Organization, and Recruitment of the Pakistani Taliban,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, Vol.22, Iss.4, pp.574-602.

more radical Taliban commanders who are filling the ranks of the ‘neo-Taliban,’ an iteration of the insurgency with a more ‘jihadist internationalist’ worldview.⁹⁸²

7.1.3 Approach

The Taliban’s approach is a mixture of rural-urban insurgency, depending on which regional command of the country is being analyzed. Overall, the insurgency is rural, protracted, and funded through rents acquired from illicit economies.⁹⁸³ Its approach, or fighting strategy, has alternatively been described as asymmetric, ‘Fourth Generation,’ Maoist, and that of the ‘war of the flea.’⁹⁸⁴ While there are certainly elements of each of these fighting styles apparent in the Taliban’s approach, the most accurate characterization is probably closest to Maoism. In the opening stages of the conflict, insurgents infiltrated the population and gained control over key areas before moving on to consolidate base areas, organize guerilla war, and create rudimentary political structures.

Before the Taliban escalated its activities between late 2005 and 2007, its fighters relied mainly on AK-47 assault rifles, RPG-7 rocket launchers, BM-1 field rockets, machine guns, suicide bombers, and improvised explosive devices.⁹⁸⁵ The fighting is asymmetric and the Taliban function primarily as a guerilla army, relying on sniping and ambushes. At times, the

⁹⁸² Thomas Ruttig, “The Battle for Afghanistan: Negotiations with the Taliban: History and Prospects for the Future,” New America Foundation, National Security Studies Program Policy Paper, May 2011, p.5.

⁹⁸³ Francisco Gutierrez Sanin and Antonio Giustozzi, “Networks and Armies: Structuring Rebellion in Colombia and Afghanistan,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 33:9, 2010, pp.838-839.

⁹⁸⁴ Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, pp.98-99.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibid, p.147.

Taliban has relied on human wave attacks, specifically in the south and east of Afghanistan.

This kind of ‘open warfare’ is rare and is mostly used to counter the effectiveness of Coalition air strikes.⁹⁸⁶

7.1.4 Funding/Financing

The Taliban’s two primary sources of funding are the narcotics trade and money donated by sympathizers in the Middle East.⁹⁸⁷ Though figures vary widely, the narcotics trade generates a profit between \$70 million and \$500 million per year for the Taliban.⁹⁸⁸ Even after the costs of sustaining an insurgency are debited, this is hardly a “rainy day fund.” How an insurgent group finances itself has a major impact on the motivation of its members, overall group morale,

⁹⁸⁶ Ibid, p.156.

⁹⁸⁷ Catherine Collins and Ashraf Ali, “Financing the Taliban: Tracking the Dollars Behind the Insurgencies in Afghanistan and Pakistan,” New America Foundation Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper, April 2010, p.1

⁹⁸⁸ Ibid, p.5. The CIA and the DIA estimate that the Taliban receives \$70 million a year from the drug trade. According to the former U.S. director of national intelligence Dennis Blair, the Taliban made \$100 million from the drug trade in 2008. The DEA puts the number at around \$300 million, while Gretchen Peters asserts that the number is much higher, probably \$500 million. For more on the role of narcotics in Afghanistan’s economy, see Jonathan Goodhand, “From War Economy to Peace Economy? Reconstruction and State Building in Afghanistan,” *Journal of International Affairs*, Fall 2004, Vol.58, No.1; Jonathan Goodhand, “Frontiers and Wars: The Opium Economy in Afghanistan,” *Journal of Agrarian Change*, Vol.5, No.2, April 2005, pp.191-216; Jon Lee Anderson, “The Taliban’s Opium War,” *The New Yorker*, July 9, 2007; Cyrus Hodges and Mark Sedra, “Chapter Three: The Opium Trade,” *Adelphi Papers*, 47:391, 2007, pp.35-42; Vanda Felbab-Brown, “Kicking the Opium Habit?: Afghanistan’s Drug Economy and Politics Since the 1980s,” *Conflict, Security & Development*, Vol.6, Iss.2, 2006; Peter van Ham and Jorrit Kamminga, “Poppies for Peace: Reforming Afghanistan’s Opium Industry,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol.30, Iss.1, Winter 2006-2007, pp.69-81; Jonathan Goodhand and David Mansfield, “Drugs and (Dis)Order: A Study of the Opium Trade, Political Settlements, and Statemaking in Afghanistan,” London School of Economics Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2, Paper No.83, November 2010; Jonathan Goodhand, “Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace? The Drugs Economy and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan,” *International Peacekeeping*, Vol.15, No.3, June 2008, pp.405-423; and Barnett R. Rubin, “Road to Ruin: Afghanistan’s Booming Opium Industry,” Center on International Cooperation, October 7, 2004.

political legitimacy, and the trajectory of the conflict.⁹⁸⁹ The Taliban does not rely solely upon narcotics as a means of funding its insurgent activities in Afghanistan and indeed maintains diverse sources of financing, coupled with a robust support network that offers both active and passive support.⁹⁹⁰ Part of the Taliban's war chest is derived from a multi-billion dollar trade in goods smuggled from Dubai to Pakistan.⁹⁹¹

The Haqqani network is also a major player in the Afghan insurgency. Although the network is part of the insurgency, it also functions like a mafia, motivated by profits but also by issues such as honor, revenge, and ideology.⁹⁹² An in-depth analysis of HQN funding is beyond the scope of this appendix, but it is worth noting that recent assessments suggest that high levels of violence, rampant criminality, and indiscriminate brutality could mean that the group has descended into more of a criminal operation than an insurgent group.

7.1.4.1 Why has funding/financing been so valuable?

Funding has been valuable because it has allowed the Taliban to sustain the insurgency for over a decade. Giustozzi estimates that the Taliban retains an annual surplus of between \$110 and \$130

⁹⁸⁹ See the considerable body of literature devoted to the effect of resources on conflict. Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (2004): 563-595; Richard Snyder, "Does Lutable Wealth Breed Disorder? A Political Economy of Extraction Framework," *Comparative Political Studies* 39, no. 8 (October 2006): 943-968; Michael L. Ross, "How Do Natural Resources Influence Civil War? Evidence from Thirteen Cases," *International Organization* 58, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 35-67; Michael L. Ross, "What Do We Know about Natural Resources and Civil War?" *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no. 3 (2004): 337-356.

⁹⁹⁰ For a discussion of active versus passive support in terrorism and insurgency, see Christopher Paul, "As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships Between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33, no. 6, (2010): 488-510.

⁹⁹¹ Barnett R. Rubin, "The Political Economy of War and Peace in Afghanistan," *World Development*, Vol.28, No.10, pp.1789-1803, 2000.

⁹⁹² Gretchen Peters, "Haqqani Network Financing: The Evolution of an Industry," *Combating Terrorism Center*, West Point, NY: Harmony Program, August 2012, p.2.

million.⁹⁹³ Gretchen Peters does a comprehensive job mapping out the Taliban's funding streams in southern, southeastern, northern, and northeastern Afghanistan.⁹⁹⁴ Money generated through crime, extortion, and fundraising is devoted to paying Taliban insurgents and obtaining weapons for the group's fighters. At various times, particularly when relations between the two groups were more cordial, the Afghan Taliban siphoned funds off for Baitullah Mehsud and the Pakistani Taliban over the border.⁹⁹⁵

7.1.4.2 How has it changed over time?

Prior to September 11th and in the nascent stages of the insurgency, the Taliban was able to rely on a steady stream of income from Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaida's financial network.⁹⁹⁶ Furthermore, while the Taliban once relied heavily on extorting transportation companies and other private contractors, as the Western footprint in Afghanistan diminishes, the funding is drying up along with it.⁹⁹⁷ As this source of internal revenue declines, the Taliban will continue to solicit donations from Middle Eastern sheikhs with deep pockets and sympathizers from the Persian Gulf and elsewhere to keep its bankroll steady.

⁹⁹³ Giustozzi, "Negotiating with the Taliban," pp.12-13.

⁹⁹⁴ See Gretchen Peters, "Crime and Insurgency in the Tribal Areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan," Combating Terrorism Center, October 2010.

⁹⁹⁵ Arabinda Acharya, Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari, and Sadia Sulaiman, "Making Money in the Mayhem: Funding Taliban Insurrection in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol.32, Iss.2, 2009, p.104.

⁹⁹⁶ Mark Basile, "Going to the Source: Why Al-Qaeda's Financial Network is Likely to Withstand the Current War on Terrorist Financing," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol.27, Iss.3, 2004, p.170.

⁹⁹⁷ See Aram Roston, "How the US Funds the Taliban," *The Nation*, November 11, 2009 and Karen DeYoung, "U.S. Trucking Funds Reach Taliban, Military-Led Investigation Concludes," *Washington Post*, July 24, 2011.

7.1.5 Sanctuary/Safe Haven

The worst kept secret throughout the insurgency has been the Afghan Taliban's Pakistani safe haven, both in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) as well as in major cities like Karachi, Quetta, and Lahore. In more recent years, the Taliban has also enjoyed sanctuary in parts of Iran. Pakistan remains the preferred locale, however, as it is geographically proximate to southern and eastern Afghanistan and is home to approximately twenty-five million Pashtuns, twice as many as live in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the rugged terrain of the AFPAK border region make it ideally suited for avoiding detection.⁹⁹⁸ At the height of the Taliban's comeback in 2007, the border provinces between Afghanistan and Pakistan were designated as either "extreme risk/hostile" or "high risk/hostile" environments.⁹⁹⁹

7.1.5.1 Why has sanctuary/safe haven been so valuable?

Throughout history, insurgents who have enjoyed relatively unfettered access to safe haven, either internal or external, have fared more successful than those insurgents without such access.¹⁰⁰⁰ Besides the popular support enjoyed by Taliban insurgents in their Pakistani sanctuary, fighters have been able to plot, recruit, proselytize, fundraise, and communicate with

⁹⁹⁸ Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2009, p.99.

⁹⁹⁹ Thomas H. Johnson, "On the Edge of the Big Muddy: The Taliban Resurgence in Afghanistan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Vol.5, No.2, 2007, p.101.

¹⁰⁰⁰ In a 2011 RAND Corporation Delphi exercise, respondents consistently cited the COIN forces' inability to prevent cross-border smuggling of weapons, narcotics, and fighters as one of the factors most likely to contribute to a potential victory for the Taliban. See Christopher Paul, *Counterinsurgency Scorecard: Afghanistan in Early 2011 Relative to the Insurgencies of the Past 30 Years*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2011. This finding is consistent with that of other expert elicitations, including one chaired by Richard L. Armitage and Samuel R. Berger and directed by Daniel S. Markey, "U.S. Strategy for Pakistan and Afghanistan," Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force Report No.65, November 2010.

each other.¹⁰⁰¹ Obviously, the most valuable aspect of the Taliban's Pakistani sanctuary is that it allows the insurgents to evade ISAF counterinsurgency operations.¹⁰⁰² The border stretches for 2,450 km and is almost impossible for Coalition troops to patrol. This challenge is compounded by a less capable and altogether unwilling Pakistani military, which deployed its paramilitary Frontier Corps and regular army elements from the 12th Corps to the FATA in 2004.¹⁰⁰³ Pakistan's FATA has been a generous safe haven to Al-Qaida as well. Between 2004 and 2011, of the 32 "serious" terrorist plots against the West, more than half (53 percent), had operational or training links to established jihadist groups in Pakistan.¹⁰⁰⁴

7.1.5.2 How has it changed over time?

The Taliban has maintained a sanctuary in Pakistan since being chased over the border by U.S. Special Forces on horseback in November 2001. In 2003 and 2004, the ISI operated training camps for Afghan Taliban insurgents in Pakistan, just north of Quetta.¹⁰⁰⁵ U.S. drone strikes have limited the ability of insurgents in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and FATA to operate freely. This is true not only of the Afghan Taliban, but also of the TTP. The issue of Taliban sanctuary in Pakistan has been perhaps the most vexing obstacle facing ISAF in Afghanistan. In what should probably qualify as somewhat of an understatement, former US

¹⁰⁰¹ Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, p.99.

¹⁰⁰² Paul Staniland, "Caught in the Muddle: America's Pakistan Strategy," *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2011, p.137.

¹⁰⁰³ Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan," *Orbis*, Winter 2007, p.83.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Paul Cruickshank, "The Militant Pipeline: Between the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border Region and the West," New America Foundation National Security Studies Program Policy Paper, second edition, July 2011.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: How the War against Islamic Extremism Is Being Lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, London: Allen Lane, 2008, p.222.

Director of National Intelligence Dennis C. Blair conceded that the safe haven in Pakistan ‘is an important Taliban strength.’¹⁰⁰⁶ In addition to safe haven provided by Pakistan, the Taliban has also bolstered its support on the western front by strengthening its ties to the mullahs in Tehran in the past few years.¹⁰⁰⁷

7.1.6 Intelligence

Even prior to the insurgency, the Afghan Taliban maintained a robust intelligence structure on both sides of the border, cooperating often with the ISI as well as the Pakistani political party Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI). In the early stages of the conflict, Taliban intelligence operatives bribed Northern Alliance commanders to infiltrate the ranks of their comrades to conduct assassinations.¹⁰⁰⁸ Taliban intelligence networks are strong at the village and neighborhood level, which allows the insurgents to control large segments of the Pashtun population in the south and east.¹⁰⁰⁹ Over the past several years, both the Taliban and the Haqqani Network have placed spies inside the ranks of the Afghan Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Ministry of Defense (MOD), and this has allowed the insurgents to strike at the heart of the Afghan security services.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Dennis C. Blair, ‘Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community,’ Testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 2 February 2010.

¹⁰⁰⁷ For more on the relationship between the Taliban and Iran, see Sajjan M. Gohel, “Iran’s Ambiguous Role in Afghanistan,” *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel*, March 2010, Vol.3, Iss.3, pp.13-16; Alireza Nader and Joya Laha, *Iran’s Balancing Act in Afghanistan*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2011; and Seth G. Jones, “Al Qaeda in Iran: Why Tehran is Accommodating the Terrorist Group,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 29, 2012.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ben Brandt, “The Taliban’s Conduct of Intelligence and Counterintelligence,” *Combating Terrorism Center Sentinel*, Vol.4, Iss.6, June 2011, p.20.

¹⁰⁰⁹ C.J. Chivers, “Afghanistan’s Hidden Taliban Government,” *New York Times*, February 6, 2011.

7.1.6.1 Why has intelligence been so valuable?

The Taliban rely on intelligence and counterintelligence to mitigate the overwhelming US firepower and technological advantage. Intelligence has been used in several capacities, from intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) to military deception (MILDEC) to high value-targeting (HVT).¹⁰¹⁰ The Taliban intelligence network is also largely responsible for the successful jail break in Kandahar city in the spring of 2011. Although it is impossible to know how many fighters went directly back to the battlefield, the spate of attacks immediately following the incident indicated an increased capability for Taliban units operating in the area.¹⁰¹¹

7.1.6.2 How has it changed over time?

The removal of key leaders in the Taliban's intelligence apparatus—Khairullah Khairkhwa, Qari Ahmadullah, and Abdul Haq Wasiq have all been captured or killed since the conflict began—has enervated the insurgents, but overall the network has proved resilient.¹⁰¹² ISAF operations in Afghanistan and U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan have kept the insurgents off balance. Evidence suggests that the Taliban's attempt to share intelligence has been made more onerous as the network is forced to reorganize and replace its commanders.¹⁰¹³ From a COIN perspective, the most alarming trend has been the increase in incidents since early 2009, in which Taliban insurgents posing as Afghan security force personnel executed coalition troops.

¹⁰¹⁰ Ibid, p.19.

¹⁰¹¹ Paraag Shukla, "ISW in Brief: Jailbreak Spurs Attacks in Kandahar City," *Institute for the Study of War*, May 12, 2011.

¹⁰¹² Brandt, "The Taliban's Conduct of Intelligence," p.20.

¹⁰¹³ Borzou Daraghi, "Afghan Intelligence Network Embraces the New," *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 2011.

7.1.6.3 What effect could operational tools have on negotiations?

If the Taliban were to lose its two primary sources of revenue—donations from wealthy sponsors abroad and money obtained through the drug trade—it could have a significant impact on the insurgents’ ability to continue fighting. Neither of these two outcomes is likely, however. Moreover, the Taliban maintains a diversified revenue stream, with other income garnered through various organized crime rackets, to include kidnapping for ransom and extortion. In short, the only way funding will play a role is in possible financial incentives offered to insurgents as part of a reintegration package.

A Department of Defense Report to Congress on Afghanistan from April 2012 states that, “the insurgency’s safe haven in Pakistan, as well as the limited capacity of the Afghan Government, remains the biggest risks to the process of turning security gains into a durable and sustainable Afghanistan. The insurgency benefits from safe havens inside Pakistan with notable operational and regenerative capacity.”¹⁰¹⁴ The continuing ability of the Taliban to use Pakistan as sanctuary provides it with a clear advantage should the insurgency’s goal be to “wait out” the United States before returning to Afghanistan after an American withdrawal and retake the country by force. At the end of the day, there is little the United States can do militarily to force the Pakistanis to eliminate this safe haven. After all, Pakistan is an “ally” with six times the population of Iraq, in addition to a growing arsenal of nuclear weapons.¹⁰¹⁵

It is difficult to know how substantial a factor the Taliban’s intelligence apparatus will be in negotiations because it remains unclear what role, if any, is designated for the intelligence network in a negotiation phase. In South Africa, both the insurgents and COIN force intelligence

¹⁰¹⁴ http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/Report_Final_SecDef_04_27_12.pdf, p.1.

¹⁰¹⁵ James F. Dobbins, *After the Taliban: Nation-Building in Afghanistan*, Washington D.C.: Potomac, 2008, p.166.

operatives were active in negotiations between the two sides. Since the Taliban's intelligence network is a primary conduit for the Pakistani ISI, there is a high likelihood that the network will factor into whatever form negotiations take.

7.2 ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

7.2.1 Command & Control

The Afghan Taliban is a decentralized network comprised of four regional *shuras* located in Quetta, Peshawar, Miramsha, and Gerdi Jangal.¹⁰¹⁶ Three overlapping networks, including the Haqqani network, Hizb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), and the Mansur network are also associated with the group.¹⁰¹⁷ The Taliban maintain both formal and informal structures, with the former consisting of the Leadership Council, provincial leadership councils, and a host of different commissions.¹⁰¹⁸ In addition to regional *shuras*, the Taliban maintains four “regional commands,” covering southern Afghanistan, eastern Afghanistan, southeastern Afghanistan, and western Afghanistan. Each “regional command” has a different relationship with the group's leadership in Pakistan as well as with the Pakistani Army and Inter-Services Intelligence.¹⁰¹⁹

Since each of the four regional *shuras* is located across the border in Pakistan, the

¹⁰¹⁶ All locations listed are in Pakistan.

¹⁰¹⁷ Shinn and Dobbins, p.19.

¹⁰¹⁸ Giustozzi, “Negotiating with the Taliban,” p.8.

¹⁰¹⁹ For example, the “southeastern command” is dominated by the Haqqani Network and therefore maintains close relations with the ISI. Ibid, p.14.

Taliban created shadow governments in each of Afghanistan's provinces, mainly as an alternative to the corrupt Afghan government. Taliban shadow governance includes a mechanism for land dispute resolution and a provincial level commission where civilians can file formal complaints against local commanders. This stands in stark contrast to an Afghan government that takes months to resolve disputes, is widely viewed as both corrupt and inept, and operates with little fear of consequence for accepting bribes and preying on the population.¹⁰²⁰ The Taliban's shadow government rules through *sharia*, or Islamic law.¹⁰²¹ According to Dressler and Forsberg, the Taliban's parallel institutions "are more effective than anything the Afghan government or international community has been able to muster."¹⁰²²

Each province has its own Taliban shadow governor responsible for civil and military matters, including financial oversight and judicial processes.¹⁰²³ In some areas, the Taliban dispenses licenses, collects a form of taxation known as *zakat*, and is preferred over the Afghan government because it is perceived as more reliable and less corrupt.¹⁰²⁴ These provincial level commissions were established to make the Taliban's shadow governance competitive with Kabul's administrative ability, which in many cases it either equals or surpasses in efficiency. The shift toward structural reorganization, rather than merely "tactical and financial in motive," appears to be a strategic move aimed at gaining support over the medium to long-term.¹⁰²⁵

¹⁰²⁰ Jeffrey Dressler and Carl Forsberg, "The Quetta Shura Taliban in Southern Afghanistan: Organization, Operations, and Shadow Governance," Institute for the Study of War Backgrounder (December 21, 2009), 8.

¹⁰²¹ Fotini Christia and Michael Semple, "Flipping the Taliban: How to Win in Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.88, No.4, July/August 2009, p.34.

¹⁰²² Dressler and Forsberg, "Quetta Shura Taliban," 7.

¹⁰²³ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁰²⁵ Peters, *Seeds of Terror*, 15-16.

7.2.2 Group Composition

Even ten years after the start of the insurgency, it remains difficult to present an accurate depiction of the Taliban's group composition. Tier I is comprised of the strategic leadership, the Quetta Shura, province shadow governors and old fighters from the 1990s. These are thought to be the most hardcore ideologues of the entire group and those most inimical to negotiating. Of course, these are the individuals most removed from the actual fighting, so they are the least likely to be affected by ISAF kinetic operations designed to force the Taliban to the negotiating table. Local leaders, full-time fighters, and active supporters make up most of Tier II. While it is difficult to gauge the political commitment of this tier, the full-time fighters are undoubtedly suffering the brunt of the COIN force military offensive. Finally, Tier III is composed of part-time fighters (to include those fighting for remuneration), less committed local supporters, and those that sympathize with the Taliban's cause.

7.2.3 Ideology

Over time, the Taliban has increasingly recognized the utility of alienating the population from the government and acquiring its active support, an indispensable outcome for any insurgent group involved in an asymmetric conflict against far superior military forces.¹⁰²⁶ In 2009, the Taliban released a sixty-nine page "Code of Conduct," which was updated a year later. The two main purposes of the booklet were to rein in unruly commanders and win back segments of the population that were disenfranchised by the Taliban's harsh tactics. The Taliban's ideological

¹⁰²⁶ Seth Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2008, p.13.

transformation has addressed the group's continuing effort to garner legitimacy, as well as changes in its organizational structure. Finally, it includes a concerted effort to portray the group as a national movement whose appeal extends beyond the traditional Pashtun strongholds of southern Afghanistan and into parts of the country dominated by Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks.

An analysis of the Taliban's ideology would not be complete without addressing the group's changing tactics over the course of the insurgency. During the early stages of the insurgency, those Taliban fighters who remained in Afghanistan organized into small pockets of resistance throughout the south and east of the country. They fought US forces in the P2K region (Paktia, Paktika, Khost) and Kunar province.¹⁰²⁷ At least initially, the Taliban relied on rocket attacks, small arms fire, and ambushes as its main tactics. However, beginning in 2005 and increasing exponentially over the next several years, the Taliban conducted a campaign of suicide attacks and roadside bombings through the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) unseen before in the Afghan conflict.

While it is difficult to pinpoint precisely when the Taliban began to reconsider the more austere elements of its ideology, some scholars argue that the genesis of the "neo-Taliban" harkens back to 2002.¹⁰²⁸ Like the Coalition, the Taliban also realizes the importance of gaining the trust and support of the population, although the increased use of improvised explosive devices, suicide bombing and the targeting of civilians might suggest otherwise.¹⁰²⁹ The driving force behind the switch to the use of suicide bombing was Mullah Dadullah, a leading Taliban

¹⁰²⁷ Anne Stenersen, "The Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan—Organization, Leadership, and Worldview," Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI), 5 February 2010, p.24.

¹⁰²⁸ Brahimi, "Evolving Ideology," 4.

¹⁰²⁹ In fact, a United Nations report attributed 75 percent of civilian casualties to the Taliban and other insurgents. See Alissa J. Rubin, "Taliban Causes Most Civilian Deaths in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, March 9, 2011.

military commander who adopted suicide bombing as a tactic after watching DVDs of similar attacks by Iraqi insurgents.¹⁰³⁰ Suicide attacks in Afghanistan increased each year from 2003 until 2007, the year that the Dadullah was killed by US forces in Helmand province.¹⁰³¹ After Dadullah's death, suicide attacks began to decline steadily, and in 2009 the Taliban's Code of Conduct provided guidance on the subject. The document suggested that suicide attacks were only acceptable in the case of high-value targets and that civilian casualties should be avoided with great care.¹⁰³²

Even with the guidance offered to avoid civilian casualties, a 2011 United Nations Report estimated that nearly three quarters of all civilian deaths in Afghanistan are caused by the Taliban and other insurgents. Possibly in response to this report and an increasing perception in Afghanistan that Taliban fighters are undisciplined, often showing wanton disregard for the lives of their fellow Afghans, the group publicly announced the start to its spring offensive in late April 2011, the first time such an announcement has been made since the beginning of the insurgency.¹⁰³³ In its statement, the Taliban mentioned the protection of civilians as a priority, claiming that every effort would be made to avoid harming or killing Afghan civilians.

The most important component of the Taliban's evolution is the group's shift to an inclusive and less draconian political platform. In sum, the Taliban still values power over profit, even if as many believe, the group's ideological shift is disingenuous and a byproduct of political expedience. Indeed, while comparisons of insurgent groups often oversimplify the

¹⁰³⁰ Brian Glyn Williams, "Mullah Omar's Missiles," *Middle East Policy*, Vol.15, No.4, Winter 2008, p.28.

¹⁰³¹ Stenersen, "Organization, Leadership, Worldview," p.27.

¹⁰³² *Ibid.*, p.27.

¹⁰³³ Alissa J. Rubin, "Taliban Say Offensive Will Begin Sunday," *New York Times*, 30 April 2011, accessed May 28, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/world/asia/01afghan.html?hp>

complexities inherent in these organizations, comparative historians know that *sequence matters* and will always look to the past for answers.

7.2.4 Popular Support

Minimizing the financial exploitation of the population and creating the mechanisms that allow for censure against those Taliban members convicted of wrongdoing places the group in juxtaposition to the corrupt and unaccountable Karzai government.¹⁰³⁴ In the “Code of Conduct,” one passage notes that “the Taliban must treat civilians according to Islamic norms and morality to win over the hearts and minds of the people.”¹⁰³⁵ From the standpoint of basic strategic approaches to insurgency, these directives should not be seen as revolutionary. In fact, many of these same tenets were laid out by Mao in “Six Main Points for Attention,” which provided his troops with directions on how to treat the population as they marauded through the countryside.¹⁰³⁶ These basic guidelines for maintaining the goodwill of the population have become more important to the Taliban’s campaign as the group’s ideology has evolved to include a more nuanced view of the importance of the population in fighting an insurgency.

If the population is truly the sea in which insurgents (the fish) swim, then the popular support of the population is critical to their success.¹⁰³⁷ The Taliban has picked up on the

¹⁰³⁴ Peters, “Crime and Insurgency,” 18-19.

¹⁰³⁵ Matiullah Achakzai, “Taliban Code of Conduct Seeks to Win Heart, Minds,” *Associated Press*, August 3, 2010.

¹⁰³⁶ Among the strictures proffered by Mao were: replace straw bedding and wooden bed-boards after sleeping at peasant homes overnight; return whatever was borrowed; pay for any item damaged; remain courteous and humane; and be fair in any business dealings. Philip Short, *Mao: A Life*, New York: Holt, 1999, p.222; another great source on Mao is Jung Chang’s *Mao: The Unknown Story*, New York: Knopf, 2005.

¹⁰³⁷ Christopher Paul, “As a Fish Swims in the Sea: Relationships between Factors Contributing to Support for Terrorist or Insurgent Groups,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Vol.33, No. 6, 2010, p.488.

Americans' insistence on a population-centric counterinsurgency strategy and has countered with its own campaign to win over the population, making critical changes to its approach over the past several years of the insurgency, including its views regarding narcotics.

In 2006, at about the same time the Taliban placed a higher priority on earning legitimacy in the eyes of the Afghan people, the group also greatly expanded recruitment efforts throughout Afghanistan, including at the village level.¹⁰³⁸ One of the main driving forces behind local recruitment of Afghans into the insurgency was the influence of the clergy.¹⁰³⁹ While the Taliban undoubtedly draws recruits from *madrassas* along the Afghan-Pakistani border, after 2006 the group expanded efforts to recruit in urban areas, especially in universities, and began to reconnect with former mujahedin commanders to grow its fighting force.¹⁰⁴⁰ The Taliban recruitment process also relies on family and clan loyalties, tribal lineage, personal friendships, and social networks.¹⁰⁴¹

Taliban recruitment efforts are bolstered by continuing corruption in the Afghan government, which extends from the highest reaches of the Karzai government all the way down to provincial, district, and village officials and security forces.¹⁰⁴² Indeed, a desire to respond to

¹⁰³⁸ Stenersen, "Organization, Leadership, Worldview," p.30.

¹⁰³⁹ Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, Laptop: The New-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, pp.38-39.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid, pp.71-72.

¹⁰⁴¹ Shahid Asfar, Chris Samples, Thomas Wood, "The Taliban: An Organizational Analysis," *Military Review*, May/June 2008, p.67.

¹⁰⁴² Najibullah Lafraie, "Resurgence of the Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan: How and Why?" *International Politics* 46 (2009): 102-113. For more on the provincial and district levels of governance in Afghanistan, see Michael Shurkin, *Subnational Government in Afghanistan*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2011; Colin Cookman and Caroline Wadhams, "Governance in Afghanistan: Looking Ahead to What We Leave Behind," Center for American Progress, May 2010; and Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, "All Counterinsurgency is Local," *The Atlantic*, October 2008.

grievances is a commonly cited factor motivating the radicalization of individuals who make the decision to join an insurgent or terrorist group.¹⁰⁴³ By exploiting the narratives of oppression, occupation, and corruption, the Taliban can appeal to both theological justifications and nationalist sentiments at the same time.¹⁰⁴⁴

7.2.5 Public Relations/propaganda

For a group comprised largely of illiterate and rural fighters, the Taliban has displayed an effective propaganda effort by taking advantage of the full range of media outlets—radio, internet, DVDs, audio cassettes, magazines, and traditional songs and poems.¹⁰⁴⁵ Through its propaganda, the Taliban attempts to portray itself as the only legitimate actor in the conflict, the vanguard of not just the Pashtun population, but of the Afghan people as a whole. The Americans are cast as just the next wave of foreign occupiers, no different than the Russians before them and the British before them.

Taliban propaganda routinely points out ISAF and Afghan government shortcomings. Frequent themes include civilian casualties resulting from Coalition air strikes and the rampant corruption of the Karzai government. In addition to these messages, Taliban propaganda assails the American-run prison at Guantanamo Bay and also provides justifications for the use of suicide bombings in Afghanistan. A significant component of the organization's propaganda

¹⁰⁴³Todd Helmus, "Why and How Some People Become Terrorists," in *Social Science for Counterterrorism: Putting the Pieces Together*, eds. Paul K. Davis and Kim Cragin, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2009, p.86.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Florian Broschk, "Inciting the Believers to Fight: A Closer Look at the Rhetoric of the Afghan Jihad," Afghanistan Analysts Network, (February 2011).

¹⁰⁴⁵ International Crisis Group Report, "Taliban Propaganda: Winning the War of Words?" Asia Report No.158, 24 July 2008.

machine, which former commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan David Richards characterized as the most sophisticated he has ever seen, is the group's public relations activities. Taliban spokesmen eagerly address the press by arranging meetings with journalists and satellite phone calls to explain their side of the story.¹⁰⁴⁶

7.2.5.1 How might organizational tools affect negotiations?

Because the Taliban is structured as a horizontal organization, it is not completely clear how much control the Quetta Shura commands over other branches of the organization. If the order is given from Mullah Omar to negotiate, who will follow? Anecdotal evidence suggests that significant numbers of mid-level commanders and fighters in the field are ready to quit. Meanwhile, the Quetta Shura grows more alienated by the day, removed from the day-to-day realities of protracted guerilla warfare. If the Taliban leadership were to negotiate an end to the conflict, it is likely that it would only face sporadic pockets of resistance from foot soldiers in Afghanistan.

In 2007 and 2008, an element of the insurgency that came to be called "pious Taliban," came out against the group's use of suicide bombing as a tactic. This group of insurgents, a sub-element of the 'Kandahari mainstream' Taliban, recognized that victory through military means was not possible. Splintering and spoiling both remain acute possibilities with respect to a negotiated settlement. Like most insurgent groups, the Taliban has its share of hardcore fighters who will refuse to give up the fight, especially those who see it as a religious obligation to retake the country and implement *sharia* in an Islamic Emirate governed by religious leaders.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov, and Laptop*, p.120.

How much the Taliban's ideology will affect possible negotiations is a question of much speculation. The Taliban has already moderated its position on several fronts. This moderation is largely superficial and is mostly an attempt to avoid alienating potential supporters in its quest for legitimacy. If negotiations do take place, ideological hardliners could seek to play the role of spoiler, as they did in the post-Bonn period.¹⁰⁴⁷ To that end, radical splinter groups aligned with the Haqqani network or Al-Qaida is almost guaranteed to emerge following a negotiated settlement.

The majority of Afghans want peace.¹⁰⁴⁸ Inevitably, the longer the conflict drags on, the more Afghan civilians are killed. This affects the level of popular support for the Taliban, even when the casualties are caused by the COIN force.¹⁰⁴⁹ Understandably, Afghans are war weary following over thirty years of constant conflict. If the Taliban is seen as a force for stability in the country, its members may be able to concentrate significant support from the Pashtun population. When translated into a political context, this bodes well for a negotiated settlement.

While public relations and propaganda will not play much of a role in influencing the Taliban's decision to negotiate or keep fighting, they will certainly affect the course of negotiations should the insurgents pursue this option. Taliban spokesmen control the group's message and influence its followers through carefully crafted public relations. This skill carries over to the realm of politics, where these same insurgents will attempt to position the Taliban as the most legitimate and representative entity of the Afghan people.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, *Thwarting Afghanistan's Insurgency: A Pragmatic Approach toward Peace and Reconciliation*, United States Institute of Peace, September 2008, pp.9-10.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Shinn and Dobbins, *Afghan Peace Talks*, p.5.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ruttig, "The Battle for Afghanistan," p.7.

7.3 STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

7.3.1 Goals & Objectives

The Taliban, or the “neo-Taliban,” as it is sometimes referred to, has developed a more nuanced understanding of the political dynamics of the insurgency since 2001 and is currently engaged in a struggle with the Afghan government to gain the allegiance of the Afghan people. The group’s focus on affecting public opinion, in accordance with Hoffman’s discussion, demonstrates that the Taliban has political goals and is using economic gain to further these goals. With so much attention paid to how the insurgency is funded, the Taliban’s ideological evolution has been misinterpreted. By temporarily shelving some of its more austere policies, the Taliban is angling to position itself as a legitimate political actor in Afghanistan.

Organizations change over time and adapt to new circumstances. Insurgent groups are no different. The changes implemented by the Taliban have been both deliberate and carefully calculated. The willingness to put certain objectives on hold in the short-term is nothing more than misdirection. Once in power, it is possible the Taliban will return to these goals. Having an idea about what the group’s objectives are will go a long way toward fashioning a peace deal amenable to all sides. As Shinn and Dobbins point out, in any negotiation there are “must haves” and “want to haves.” Taliban “must haves” include the removal of foreign forces from Afghanistan (with no presence other than *temporary* peacekeepers), a guarantee of security for the insurgents, and the prospect of political legitimacy, both internal and external.¹⁰⁵⁰

One of the most important questions is whether or not the Taliban remains committed to

¹⁰⁵⁰ Shinn and Dobbins, *Afghan Peace Talks*, p.24.

building an Islamic state in Afghanistan. To this point, all indications have suggested that this is the case, although just how much Afghanistan would move toward the institutionalization of Islamic law is likely an area of compromise.

7.3.2 Seminal Events

7.3.2.1 The Demise of Al-Qaida?

Of all possible outcomes in Afghanistan, the most important to the United States is that Afghanistan never again becomes a country hospitable for transnational terrorists. Some ancillary objectives, like women's rights, are likely to suffer once Coalition troops depart. Despite the best intentions of those who work to obtain such noble, if not quixotic, goals, Afghanistan is unlikely to develop into a Jeffersonian democracy. From a purely pragmatic standpoint, the US is mainly concerned that whatever follows its exit from Afghanistan, Al-Qaida or groups of its ilk will not be able to use the country as a place to plot, plan, and set in motion attacks against the West. Much of this depends on the state of the relationship between the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

By now, the story of how the Taliban provided sanctuary to bin Laden and Al-Qaida before September 11th, and refused to 'hand him over,' following the attacks is well-known. Throughout the late 1990s and leading up to 9/11, Al-Qaida ran a parallel state alongside the Taliban and even conducted its own foreign policy independent from Omar's organization.¹⁰⁵¹ While Al-Qaida has since developed relationships with groups in Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen,

¹⁰⁵¹ Peter Bergen, *The Longest War: The Enduring Conflict between America and Al-Qaeda*, New York: Free Press, 2011, p.90.

Mali, and even Nigeria, “in none of these other places is there a partnership between the local governments and Al Qaeda such as existed between that organization and the Taliban regime prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001.”¹⁰⁵²

What is less clear is the current state of the relationship and what form that relationship would take in a future Afghan government that includes Taliban members within its ranks. As Strick van Linschoten and Kuen note in their recent study of these two groups, “The issue of the relationship between the Taliban and al- Qaeda is not as big a potential stumbling block among old-generation Taliban as common wisdom holds. For circumstantial reasons, in the last three years (2007- 10) the Taliban have taken considerable care in their public statements to implicitly distance themselves from al-Qaeda, while offering clear indications of their disaffection with the foreign militants in private.”¹⁰⁵³ Within the Taliban, Al Qaida’s numbers are small, its leverage has decreased, and its influence on decision-making is likely minimal, especially after the death of bin Laden. Shinn and Dobbins quote a former Taliban minister who told them, “Our ties with Al Qaeda will end with a negotiated peace accord. Our alliance with Al Qaeda is a fighting alliance, a convenience of war.”¹⁰⁵⁴

7.3.2.2 After ISAF: Preparing for the Withdrawal of the US & NATO

Of all the seminal events in Afghanistan over the past decade—Quran burnings, civilian casualties, the Kabul Bank scandal—none will be more important than the phases immediately following the withdrawal of US, NATO, and ISAF troops from Afghanistan. Then, and only

¹⁰⁵² Shinn and Dobbins, *Afghan Peace Talks*, p.3.

¹⁰⁵³ Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, “Separating the Taliban from al-Qaeda: The Core of Success in Afghanistan,” New York University Center on International Cooperation, February 2011, p.7.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Shinn and Dobbins, *Afghan Peace Talks*, p.92.

then, will the international community have a hint at what the future might hold. The Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), to include the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP) will be left with the difficult task of providing security throughout the country, likely with the assistance of a small footprint of U.S. Special Forces and other counterterrorist capabilities.¹⁰⁵⁵

7.3.3 Previous Attempts at Conflict Resolution

Previous attempts by both all parties involved to resolve the conflict will likely influence the manner in which future negotiations unfold. In the first few months following the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan, scores of Taliban fighters defected for money and promises of honorable positions in a new government. In December 2001, Mullah Omar made a public offering to surrender Kandahar to Afghan tribal leaders.¹⁰⁵⁶ The *emir* dispatched a group of senior Taliban leaders—Tayyeb Agha, Mullah Baradar, Mullah Obaidullah, and Mullah Abdul Razzaq—to negotiate the terms of a surrender.¹⁰⁵⁷ But in December 2001, the United States and

¹⁰⁵⁵ For more on the challenges of training and equipping ANSF, see Anthony H. Cordesman, Adam Mausner, and David Kasten, *Winning in Afghanistan: Creating Effective Afghan Security Forces*, Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2009; Mark Sedra, “Police Reform in Afghanistan: An Overview,” in Mark Sedra, ed., *Confronting Afghanistan’s Security Dilemma: Reforming the Security Sector*, Brief 28, Bonn International Center for Conversion, September 2003, pp.32-39; Terrence K. Kelly, Nora Bensahel, and Olga Oliker, *Security Force Assistance in Afghanistan: Identifying Lessons for Future Efforts*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2011; Obaid Younossi et al., *The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2009; Seth G. Jones and Arturo Munoz, *Afghanistan’s Local War: Building Local Defense Forces*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2010, David E. Thaler et al., *Future U.S. Security Relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan: U.S. Air Force Roles*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2008.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Omar’s public declaration led to the defection of senior Taliban commander Abdul Wahid three years later. Other high-ranking Taliban who have switched sides include the Hotak brothers of Wardak Province, Nur Ali Haidery Ishaqzai, Abdul Salam Rocketi, and the recently assassinated Arsala Rahmani. See Christia and Semple, “Flipping the Taliban,” p.36.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Ruttig, “The Battle for Afghanistan,” p.6.

the Northern Alliance were not interested in compromise, and summarily rejected the Taliban's offer. Ruttig describes the U.S. strategy during this period as "mopping up 'Taliban remnants,'" which served as a complement to its', "we do not talk to terrorists doctrine."¹⁰⁵⁸ Other attempts at resolving the conflict occurred with the establishment of Jamiat-e-Khuddam ul-Furqan in late 2001, the Emergency Loya Jirga in 2002, the Saudi Initiative in 2007-2008, HIG rapprochement in late 2008, and meetings in Dubai in the spring of 2009.¹⁰⁵⁹

On a more micro-level, reintegration efforts in Afghanistan have proceeded on and off since 2001. Unlike the macro-level reconciliation efforts, which include the high-level, strategic and political dialogue that is the focus of this final section, reintegration refers to tactical and operational efforts to assimilate low and mid-ranking fighters back into their local villages and provinces.¹⁰⁶⁰ Since 2010, the locus of reintegration efforts has been the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP), which is "based on a broad strategic vision led by Afghan men and women for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan."¹⁰⁶¹ Implementation of the APRP is proceeding on two tracks. The first track centers on reintegrating low- and mid-level fighters back into their local communities (the "operational level") while the second track is geared toward reconciling with members of the insurgent leadership to permit them back into Afghan society (the "strategic and political levels").¹⁰⁶²

¹⁰⁵⁸ Ibid, p.7.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid, pp.7-8.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Seth G. Jones, *Reintegrating Afghan Insurgents*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corp., 2011, p.ix.

¹⁰⁶¹ Islamic Republic of Afghanistan National Security Council, Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) Programme Document, July 2010, p.1.

¹⁰⁶² I am thankful to Jason Campbell for this observation.

7.3.4 Mutually Hurting Stalemate (MHS)

A snapshot of summer 2012 reveals a different strategic scenario in each of Afghanistan's regional commands (RCs). Regional commands North and West, commanded by Germany and Italy respectively, are relatively pacified compared to the rest of the country. In Regional commands South, Southwest, East, and Capital (Kabul), Taliban and insurgent activity is still an everyday reality. For the countries operating in these RCs—the United States, France, Holland, Britain, and several others—the insurgent threat shows little sign of abating. According to Ruttig, “despite the significant number of casualties the Taliban have suffered, including among commanders, there is no sign that their momentum has been stopped, in spite of U.S. military assertions to the contrary. Instead, their geographic reach, ethnic inclusiveness, and potential for intimidation seem to be growing.”¹⁰⁶³ The decision by the Obama administration to go ahead with the troop surge and increased drone strikes across the border in Pakistan were supposed to be the great equalizers, however, neither has been able to crush the Taliban in the manner that many expected.

7.3.5 Decision Making Structure and Process

The Taliban's efforts to present itself as the most legitimate actor in the Afghan conflict require buttressing its own credentials while simultaneously discrediting the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan government. In this sense, legitimacy is a zero-sum game. Beginning in 2006, as the insurgency increased in strength, the Taliban portrayed itself as

¹⁰⁶³ Ruttig, “The Battle for Afghanistan,” p.4.

a broad-based independence movement.¹⁰⁶⁴ Public statements drew attention to the American occupation, egregious corruption within the Afghan government, and even attempted to offer commentary on political events.¹⁰⁶⁵ Furthermore, the Taliban crafted its public statements in a way that avoided mentioning specific tribes or ethnic groups and even softened its anti-Shia rhetoric.¹⁰⁶⁶

Another departure from past views includes a different approach to women's rights and female education, which the Taliban no longer opposes as fervently as it once did.¹⁰⁶⁷ In Taliban-controlled areas, there has been an easing of social restrictions, including a toleration of television, music, and movies.¹⁰⁶⁸ Finally, the Taliban's shadow governance has imbued the group with a sense of legitimacy because the judicial arm of the group's parallel government is credited with offering swift justice in areas including disputes over land, family issues, loans, and crime.¹⁰⁶⁹

The Taliban's "hearts and minds" offensive has been girded by an attempt to distance itself from al Qa'ida, although any separation is likely more rhetoric than reality. To be sure, several senior Taliban leaders, including Mullah Omar and Mullah Zakir, continue to have

¹⁰⁶⁴ Alia Brahimi, "The Taliban's Evolving Ideology," London School of Economics Global Governance Working Paper, February 2010, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Stenersen, "Organization, Leadership, and Worldview," p.32.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Brahimi, "Evolving Ideology," p.11.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Ibid., p.9.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid., p.8.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid.

working relationships with senior al Qaeda leaders such as Ayman al-Zawahiri and Abu Yahya al-Libi.¹⁰⁷⁰

On narcotics, the Taliban's position has evolved considerably throughout the years. As described above, the Taliban flip flopped back and forth on its stance toward narcotics between 1994 and 2001. Keeping in line with its renewed offensive to win "hearts and minds," the Taliban now actively promotes the growing of poppy and provides protection to farmers growing the crop.¹⁰⁷¹ As Coalition forces continue to target the nexus between narcotics and the insurgency, the Taliban portrays itself as a defender of Afghans' livelihoods, while attempting to paint Coalition forces as an occupying force intent on destroying the crop most important to the Afghan economy. More recently, a report in May 2012 surfaced suggesting that Taliban fighters destroyed fields of opium poppies in eastern Afghanistan, the first time since 2001.¹⁰⁷²

7.3.5.1 How could strategic decision making influence negotiations?

The factors that comprise a group's strategic decision making will have a major impact on whether or not the insurgents will negotiate. If the Taliban maintains the quixotic goal of reestablishing the country as an Islamic Emirate, negotiations will break down quickly.

Determining just how 'tribal' Taliban decision-makers actually are will go a long way toward determining the utility of negotiations.¹⁰⁷³ Moreover, seminal events, foremost among them the Taliban's relationship with Al Qaeda is likely a deal breaker should Mullah Omar's organization

¹⁰⁷⁰ I am thankful to Seth Jones for this observation.

¹⁰⁷¹ Brahimi, "Evolving Ideology," p.9.

¹⁰⁷² Emma Graham-Harrison, "Taliban Destroy Poppy Fields in Surprise Clampdown on Afghan Opium Growers," *The Guardian*, May 20, 2012.

¹⁰⁷³ Thomas Ruttig, "How Tribal Are the Taliban," Afghanistan Analysts Network Thematic Report, June 2010.

remain intent on continuing the relationship. Previous attempts at conflict resolution, contrary to popular opinion, may actually work to enhance the prospects of negotiation. Even though previous attempts have fallen short, these forays into reconciliation familiarized the parties involved. Indeed, the United States is not going to withdraw support from the Karzai administration anytime soon, despite heated rhetoric.

7.3.6 Snapshot in Time: Late 2012 and U.S. Prospects for Success in Afghanistan

If, as I state in the beginning of this study, the best outcome in Afghanistan is a negotiated settlement with the Taliban, then the United States is going to be disappointed. With a continuous funding stream from the Middle East and Persian Gulf donors, and a neighboring sanctuary provided through the protection of Pakistan's ISI, the Taliban still possess the two most important operational tools to maintain its ability to conduct successful attacks against ISAF forces operating in Afghanistan. On the organizational side, the Taliban still maintains a high level of popular support among the Pashtun population and its group composition is dominated by ideologues, particularly among the leadership. Even if one argues that ISAF has locked the insurgents into a mutually hurting stalemate, the most important factors that lead insurgents to negotiate are missing. The most likely scenario post-2014 is a return to civil war among Afghanistan's fragmented ethnic groups, which will make a negotiated settlement seem like a grand bargain.

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DEDICATION

*This dissertation is dedicated to all those who lost and gave their lives on September 11, 2001 and in the years following, in the service of the United States of America. 9/11 was the watershed event of my young adulthood and probably the event most responsible for where I am today, what I am studying academically and professionally, and much else that I hope to learn. Never forget. *C.P.C. 18 OCTOBER 2012, Pittsburgh, PA**